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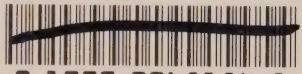

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LESAGE'S GIL BLAS

TRANSLATED BY

TOBIAS SMOLLETT—I

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THE ADVENTURES OF GIL BLAS DE SANTILLANA

BY ALAIN-RENÉ LESAGE

TRANSLATED BY
TOBIAS SMOLLETT
WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
JAMES FITZMAURICE-KELLY
FELLOW OF THE BRITISH ACADEMY

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IN TWO VOLUMES : VOL. I

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
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ALAIN-RENÉ LESAGE

Born : Sarzeau (Brittany) . . May 8, 1668.
Died : Boulogne (Pas-de-Calais) November 17, 1747.

The first two volumes of 'Gil Blas,' containing Books I-VI, were published at Paris in 1715*; the third volume, containing Books VII-IX, appeared at Paris in* 1724*; and the fourth, containing Books X-XII, in* 1735. *An edition of the complete work, revised by the author, was issued at Paris in* 1747. *Smollett's translation was first published in* 1748. *In 'The World's Classics' it was first published in two volumes in* 1907, *and reprinted in* 1928.

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INTRODUCTION

I

If nothing were known of Lesage[1] and his personal history, a reader of *Gil Blas* might be tempted to conjecture that the author had lived an eventful life in romantic places. The facts are more prosaic. Lesage passed a humdrum existence at his desk. His most arduous adventure was a squabble with a group of upstart actors, and he seldom went further afield than the Jeu du Bel-Air, a theatrical booth at the fairs of Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent. Descended from a family of Breton lawyers, he became an orphan at the age of fourteen,[2] lost his patrimony through the knavery of his guardians,[3] was educated by the Jesuits at Vannes, went to study law at Paris, and remained there for half a century. On September 28, 1694, he

[1] Two autographs of Lesage's are known to exist: an undated letter to Louis Fuzelier, one of his collaborators at the Théâtre de la Foire; and a letter (dated June 18, 1715) to the Chancellor Pontchartrain. In each of these his surname is distinctly written in one word.

For biographical data I have followed the only trustworthy authority: M. Henri Guesdon's *Notice biographique sur Alain-René Lesage* in the *Bulletin de la Société Polymathique du Morbihan* (Vannes, 1886), 51-64. As this local publication is not readily accessible, M. Guesdon's valuable study is apt to escape attention.

[2] His father, Claude Lesage, Sieur de Kerbistoul, died on December 24, 1682; his mother, whose maiden name was Jeanne Brenugat, died on September 11, 1677.

[3] These were his uncles, Gabriel Lesage and Alain Brenugat, Sieur de la Pillais.

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married Marie-Élisabeth Huyard, and, at some date previous to the baptism of his eldest son, René-André (July 30, 1695), was called to the bar.[1] But he does not appear to have practised,[2] and, though he is said to have received a comfortable allowance for some years from the Abbé de Lyonne,[3] during the greater part of his struggling life his sole resource was his pen. This accounts for his copiousness, and for the inequality of his writings. Studious as were his tastes, it is by no means certain that he felt any irresistible vocation for authorship: possibly he might never have published a line had he been in easy circumstances. Necessity compelled him to become a bookseller's hack, and to publish hundreds of pages which the world has firmly and rightly refused to read.

His entry into literature was unpromising. At the suggestion of his friend, Antoine Danchet, then a Professor at Chartres, he began with a version of Aristaenetus, and, as he knew little or no Greek, he took as the basis of his translation the Latin rendering of Jacques Bongars. As might have been foreseen, *Les Lettres d'Aristénète* (1695) fell dead from the press. Nobody read the book but the faithful Danchet, and nobody remembered it but the thrifty Lesage, who, when collecting odds and ends from his portfolios forty-five years later, padded out *La Valise trouvée* by reprinting his first work. Once more Aristaenetus failed to charm. Lesage was eminently practical, and, finding that the public took no pleasure in second-

[1] In the baptismal certificate Lesage is described as 'avocat.'

[2] In the baptismal certificate (April 24, 1698) of his second son, Julien-François, Lesage is described simply as 'bourgeois de Paris.'

[3] This statement occurs for the first time in vol. xv. of the *Petite Bibliothèque des Théâtres*, published in 1789, seventy-four years after Lyonne's death, and forty-two years after the death of Lesage. The evidence, therefore, is not strong, but the tradition may be true.

hand translations of indifferent Greek authors, he sought material elsewhere. Marie Carlos, the maiden name of his mother-in-law, seems to denote Spanish descent, and it has been suggested that she may have been the first to inspire him with an interest in Spanish literature. This is possible; but, according to current tradition, Lesage received his first impulse in this direction from the Abbé Jules de Lyonne, son of Hugues de Lyonne, the celebrated diplomatist. The Abbé seems to have been disreputable, and he was unquestionably eccentric; but posterity has forgiven him a good deal on the supposition that he taught Lesage Spanish, and that he made him an allowance of 600 *livres* a year.

The Abbé had an apt pupil. In a volume entitled *Théâtre espagnol* (1700) Lesage issued *Le Traître puni* and *Don Félix de Mendoce*, translations respectively of Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla's *Traicion busca el castigo* and Lope de Vega's *Guardar y guardarse;* and in 1702 he produced at the Théâtre-Français *Le Point d'honneur*, an adaptation of Rojas Zorrilla's *No hay amigo para amigo.* The piece was thought to resemble too closely Scarron's *Jodelet duelliste* (taken from the same source), and it was withdrawn after the second performance.[1] Lesage, however, was not disheartened, and in 1704 he published the *Nouvelles Aventures de Don Quichotte*, a singularly free version of Alonso Fernandez de Avellaneda's aprocryphal sequel to Cervantes's masterpiece. In this publication Lesage essayed the method which he pursued later with such consummate success in *Gil Blas.* When half-way through his task of translating, he departs from the Spanish text, omits or expands at pleasure, and substitutes his own gay fancies for his author's laboured

[1] *Le Point d'honneur*, played at the Théâtre-Français on February 3, 1702, no longer exists in its original form. Lesage reduced the five acts to three, and published the piece in 1725 under the title of *L'Arbitre des différends.*

jests. By these courageous processes he contrived to give far too favourable an impression of Avellaneda's work, and counted Pope among his admiring readers.[1] Thus encouraged, he persevered in the same path. From Calderon's *Peor está que estaba* he devised *Don César de Ursin*, a piece hissed by all but the Court party when performed at the Théâtre-Français on March 15, 1707; but on the same evening and in the same place both courtiers and townsmen applauded the sprightly *Crispin rival de son maître*, adapted by Lesage from Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza's ingenious comedy, *Los Empeños del mentir*.

He had now learned his business thoroughly, and in this same year (1707) he published *Le Diable boiteux*, a satirical fantasy suggested by Luis Velez de Guevara's *Diablo cojuelo*. Lesage set out probably intending to translate freely, but he did much more than this. After loosely adapting the first of the ten *trancos* (or strides) into which *El Diablo cojuelo* is divided, Lesage asserts his independence, throws Guevara overboard, exercises his own charming talent, and embellishes the story with piquant allusions to Ninon de Lenclos and the actor Baron, with pointed repartee, and with witty reflections on all classes of society. The book made the author's reputation, and was duly denounced by the Old Guard. Boileau threatened to discharge his page-boy for bringing it into the house at Auteuil, and Jean-Baptiste Rousseau declared its vogue to be a

[1] This seems to follow from an allusion in the *Essay on Criticism*, 267-272:

> 'Once on a time La Mancha's knight, they say,
> A certain bard encount'ring on the way,
> Discoursed in terms as just, with looks as sage,
> As e'er could Dennis, of the Grecian stage;
> Concluding all were desperate sots and fools.
> Who durst depart from Aristotle's rules.'

Avellaneda does not mention Aristotle's rules, but Lesage does in his adaptation of Avellaneda, i, 377.

public scandal.[1] Nobody paid the least attention to the horrified pair. A second edition was hurried out, two gentlemen claimed the last available copy of it, and fought for it sword in hand on the steps of Sainte-Chapelle. The world smiled then, as it smiles still, at the Lame Devil's courteous correction of Don Cleophas—'Vous n'avez pas des idées justes de notre enfer'—and at his epigrammatic account of what followed on his quarrel with his rival Pillardoc—'Après cela on nous réconcilia, nous nous embrassâmes, et depuis ce temps-là nous sommes ennemis mortels.'

On January 1, 1708, *Les Étrennes*, a piece in one act, was rejected by the committee of the Comédie-Française. Lesage recast his play, added four acts, called it *Turcaret*, and through the intervention of the Dauphin or the Duc de Bourgogne, forced his comedy upon the Théâtre-Français, where it was produced (February 14, 1709), much against the will of the actors. A masterly satire on financiers, *Turcaret* is the best example of Lesage's dramatic gift, and in connexion with it there survives an anecdote which throws light upon his character. He was to read his play at the Duchesse de Bouillon's, but, being detained in court by a law-suit, he arrived late. The hostess tartly reproached him with making her and her guests lose an hour. 'Eh bien, Madame, je vais vous faire gagner deux heures, je n'aurai pas l'honneur de vous lire ma comédie,' said Lesage; and with this he left the house, refusing to be cajoled back by the ladies, who pursued him down the staircase with beseeching apologies.[2] His sturdy spirit should have

[1] The story of Boileau's threatening to dismiss his page Atis, and Rousseau's condemnation of *Le Diable boiteux*, occur in a letter to Brossette, dated March 25, 1716. See *Œuvres de J.-B. Rousseau* (Paris, 1820), v, 147.

[2] *Journal et Mémoires de Charles Collé sur les hommes de lettres, les ouvrages dramatiques et les événements les plus mémorables du regne de Louis XIV.* Nouvelle

recommended him to Boileau, who had given a memorable snub to Louis XIV himself: 'Votre Majesté peut tout ce qu'Elle veut; Elle a voulu faire de mauvais vers: Elle y a réussi.'

Impatient of airs and graces in fine ladies who affected an interest in literature, Lesage was no less intolerant of impertinent pretension in fashionable actors. Justly attributing the comparative failure of *Turcaret* to the ill-will of the King's players, he broke with the Théâtre-Français,[1] went over to the opposition, and for nearly thirty years supplied the popular Théâtre de la Foire[2] and the Palais-Royal with a series of light, amusing pieces very welcome to the frivolous public and to Dame Baron, sister of the celebrated actor, the elderly coxcomb ridiculed in *Gil Blas* as Carlos Alonso de la Ventoleria. These numerous plays brought Lesage an income of 4,000 *livres* a year from 1715 onwards, and more than compensated for the loss of the pension which, we may assume, ceased upon the death of the Abbé de Lyonne.[3] In 1715 he published the first two volumes of *Gil Blas*,[4] a work destined

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édition . . . avec une introduction et des notes par Honoré Bonhomme (Paris, 1868), i, 187. Collé gives the story, of which there are several variants, on the authority of Lesage's collaborator at the Théâtre de la Foire, Louis Fuzelier, from whom he had heard it the day before he wrote it down in June, 1750.

[1] *La Tontine* was played at the Comédie in 1732. but this was probably due to pressure from Lesage's eldest son, who was then a member of the company.

[2] The first piece by Lesage produced at the Foire was *Les petits maîtres* (September 19, 1712), the last was *Le Neveu supposé* (September 6, 1738). In all, alone or in collaboration with Fuzelier, d'Orneval, and others, he seems to have written just one hundred plays for the Foire. See V. Barberet, *Lesage et le Théâtre de la Foire* (Nancy, 1887), 219-225.

[3] Jules de Lyonne died in January, 1715.

[4] Some copies of the first two volumes are dated 1714.

to occupy him more or less for twenty years. He was not free to devote himself to it exclusively. He had a family to support, and his time was given to free translations of Boiardo and Mateo Aleman; to the editing of the *Aventures de Robert, dit le Chevalier de Beauchesne*, based on the genuine autobiography of a buccaneer; to the composition of *Estebanille Gonzalès* and *Une Journée des Parques*,[1]; to the continuous production of pieces for the Théâtre de la Foire,[2] and no doubt to much miscellaneous hack work.[3] It was superfluous for the Abbé Colvil of Tours to tell Spence that 'Monsieur Lesage writes for bread'[4]; the fact was evident. A third volume of *Gil Blas* was issued in 1724, but the fourth was delayed so long that the chances of its appearance seemed slight to an anonymous contemporary diarist, who noted that Lesage had received from his publisher an advance of

[1] *Roland l'Amoureux* appeared in 1717-1721, *Guzman d'Alfarache* and *Beauchesne* in 1732, *Estebanille Gonzalès* and *Une Journée des Parques* in 1734.

[2] The first three volumes of Lesage's *Théâtre de la Foire* appeared in 1721; the fourth and fifth in 1724; the sixth, seventh, and eighth in 1731; and the ninth in 1734.

[3] There seems to be no doubt that Lesage wrote several plays which he did not care to claim—for example, *Le jeune vieillard, La Force de l'amour, La Foire des Fées,* and *Les Amants jaloux.* The Comte de Pontchartrain speaks of him as a suitable man to correct—'par rapport à la diction'—translations of Oriental manuscripts, and he collaborated with the younger François Pétis de la Croix in the *Contes persans.* See Léo Claretie, *Lesage romancier* (Paris, 1890), 36, 50, 51.

On the other hand, Lesage is not the author of three works which have been ascribed to him: *La Promenade de Saint-Cloud, ou la Confidence réciproque* (La Haye, 1738), the *Vie de don Alfonse Blas de Lirias, fils de Gil Blas de Santillane* (Amsterdam, 1754), and the *Histoire de Rodriguez Vexillario* (Cambrai, 1842).

[4] Joseph Spence, *Anecdotes, Observations, and Characters of Books and Men* (London, 1858), 142.

100 pistoles on account.[1] The concluding volume appeared at last in 1735. Lesage still continued to write and publish,[2] but his work was done. *Gil Blas* had not enriched him, but it had made him a European celebrity, and brought visitors to the little house in the Rue Saint-Jacques du Haut-Pas where he lived, aided by the generosity of Montménil (the stage name of his eldest son). Spence gives a pleasing impression of the place and of the author :

'It was as pretty as it was small, and when he was in the study part of it, he was quite retired from the noise of the street, or any interruptions from his own family. The garden was only of the breadth of the house, from which you stepped out into a raised square parterre, planted with a variety of the choicest flowers. From this, you went down, by a flight of steps on each side, into a *berceau ;* which led to two rooms, or summer-houses, quite at the end of the garden. These were joined by an open portico, the roof of which was supported by columns ; so that he could walk from the one to the other all under cover, in the intervals of writing. The *berceaux* were covered with vines and honeysuckles, and the space between them was grove-work. It was in the right-hand room as you go down that he wrote *Gil Blas.*'[3]

Lesage was not reluctant to speak of his work, and to gossip banteringly about countries that he had never seen. 'Holland,' he thought, 'would be a good country to live in—if you could only change the four elements and the people.' He politely sought to justify the perpetual grumbling of the English. 'Surely he said, 'the people of England are the most unhappy people on the face of the earth—with liberty, property,

[1] *Journal de la Cour et de Paris, depuis le* 28 *Novembre,* 1732, *jusqu'au* 30 *Novembre,* 1733, printed by Jules Ravenel in the *Revue rétrospective, ou Bibliothèque historique,* 2me série (Paris, 1836), v, 165.

[2] *Le Bachelier de Salamanque* appeared in 1736. *La Valise trouvée* in 1740, and *Le Mélange amusant* in 1743.

[3] Spence, *Anecdotes,* etc., 188.

and three meals a day.' So, with sallies of gentle irony, he amused his guests, and lived happily enough till the tragic death of Montménil in 1743.[1] Accompanied by his wife and daughter,[2] Lesage left Paris, and thenceforth lived with his son, Julien-François,[3] Canon of the cathedral at Boulogne-sur-Mer. There, at 3, Rue du Château, he was visited by the Comte de Tressan, a general of some literary accomplishment, who took over the Boulogne command after the defeat of the Pretender at Culloden.[4] Writing long afterwards,[5] when he himself was close on eighty, Tressan recalled Lesage as an early riser, increasing in cheerfulness till noon, at his best for an hour after dinner, flagging as the day advanced, drifting into conversation which resembled the Archbishop of Granada's last homily,

[1] Montménil (René-André Lesage), born in 1695, met his death while hunting at La Villette on September 8, 1743. He went on the stage against his father's wish, excelled in comic characters, and in 1728 became a 'sociétaire à demi-part' at the Comédie-Française. His youngest brother, François-Antoine, born in 1700, also became an actor, assuming the name of Pitténec. He is said to have recast two of his father's minor pieces: *Le Testament de la Foire* and *Le Miroir magique*.

[2] Lesage's widow died on April 7, 1752; his daughter, Marie-Élisabeth, born in 1702, died unmarried at Boulogne-sur-Mer on September 21, 1779.

[3] Julien-François, Lesage's second son, was born on April 24, 1698. He became Dean of the Boulogne Chapter, and died on April 25, 1762.

[4] *Souvenirs du Comte de Tressan, Louis-Élisabeth de la Vergne . . . réunis par son arrière-petit-neveu le Marquis de Tressan* (Paris, 1897), 43. Had the Pretender succeeded, Tressan was to have been appointed Governor of Dover.

[5] To Mayer, the publisher of Lesage's *Œuvres choisies* (Amsterdam, 1783). The letter to Mayer is dated January 20, 1783. Tressan, who was born on November 4, 1705, died on November 1, 1783. He had succeeded Condillac at the French Academy in 1781.

and sinking into a state of lethargy after sunset.[1] Another witness, the Abbé de Voisenon, with whom Lesage dined almost every day at Boulogne-sur-Mer, describes him as satirically gay in spite of his deafness —'le premier sourd qu'on ait vu gai'—and protecting himself against bores by putting away his ear-trumpet ('mon bienfaiteur,' as he called it).[2] Appropriately enough, his last year was spent in retouching *Gil Blas*, the definitive edition of which appeared in 1747.

II

It was early observed that Lesage was deficient in inventive power, and the criticism is to the point. He needed a suggestion, he took it without hesitation wherever he found it, and he made no secret of his indebtedness. In the case of *Le Diable boiteux* he admits his debt to Velez de Guevara almost too generously. He had read too widely and too intelligently to believe that many plots or many subjects are wholly original, and he acted on this belief, borrowing from any source whatever suited his purpose. Hence 'the *Gil Blas* Question': the question whether Lesage wrote *Gil Blas*, or whether he stole it

[1] Culloden was fought on April 16, 1746. According to his *Souvenirs* (p. 44), Tressan did not become Governor of Boulogne-sur-Mer till a year later. As Lesage died on November 17, 1747, Tressan cannot have seen much of him. Collé, writing in 1767, also compares Lesage's conversation in old age to the Archbishop of Granada's homilies; but there is no reason to suppose that Collé was intimately acquainted with Lesage, and, in any case, reminiscences more than twenty years old are prone to be inexact. Most elderly people are compared sooner or later with the Archbishop of Granada, and obviously Lesage was the last man who could hope to escape.

[2] *Œuvres complètes de M. l'Abbé de Voisenon de l'Académie Française* (Paris, 1781), iv, 54.

from the Spanish. The first definite charge of plagiarism was made by Voltaire, who in the earlier editions of the *Siècle de Louis XIV* (1751) had curtly dismissed Lesage with the remark: 'Son roman de *Gil Blas* est demeuré, parce qu'il y a du naturel.' This is not effusive, but in the 1775 edition of the *Siècle de Louis XIV* Voltaire went a step further, and added: 'It is entirely taken from the Spanish novel entitled *La Vidad de lo Escudiero dom Marcos d'Obrego*.' The fact that Voltaire makes seven mistakes in quoting a title nine words long does not inspire absolute confidence in his knowledge of Spanish literature; but he may easily have read *Marcos de Obregon* in Vital d'Audiguier's French translation (1618) of Espinel's story, and, if so, he cannot have failed to notice points of resemblance between it and *Gil Blas*. He had no reason to love Lesage, who had ridiculed him at the Théâtre de la Foire and at the Palais-Royal in *Le Temple de la Mémoire* (1725), where M. Prosne-Vers announces that his most illustrious friend is 'le célebrissime Auteur d'un élégantissime Poëme Épique,' which eclipses all other poems, past, present, and to come. The play as acted made the allusion clear by means of a poor pun—'Je prends mon vol terre à terre' (mon Voltaire à terre); but, as this was not good enough to print, the bard who wrote the most elegant epic is identified in a note to the published edition as the author of *La Ligue*. Again, in the second *séance* of *Une Journée des Parques*, Clotho and Lachesis satirize the 'universal author,' who succeeded with four plays out of fifty-five, and whose four successes failed when reproduced ten years later, after the novelty had worn off. This left very little doubt as to the original of Gabriel Triaquero in *Gil Blas*. It is true that these teasing jests were half a century old, and that the jester was in his grave; but Voltaire was not incapable of resentment at any distance of time, and he accordingly launched his accusation of wholesale plagiarism. Probably the charge was seen to be an

absurd exaggeration. At any rate, it produced no effect in France.

A few years later, however, it was taken up in Spain by a translator of *Gil Blas*, who on his title-page (1787) described the adventures of the hero as 'stolen from Spain, and appropriated to France by M. Lesage, and restored to their tongue and their native country by a jealous Spaniard, who will not allow his nation to be made game of.' The Spanish translation purports to be by Joaquin Federico Is-salps, an anagram for José Francisco de Isla, a Jesuit who had died in 1781. It has been suggested that the preface to this posthumous translation, justifying the thesis announced on the title-page, may be the work of an ingenious publisher; but Isla was an incorrigible wag, whose jokes had brought him into trouble more than once, and the preface is quite in his manner. Isla argues that Lesage cannot be the author of *Gil Blas*, because a corporation of French scholars admitted that he was not; and he goes on to assert that Lesage lived for many years in Spain as the guest of the French Ambassador at Madrid; that he there made acquaintance with a mysterious Andalusian lawyer, who gave him the Spanish manuscript of *Gil Blas* (a political satire written in the reigns of Philip III and Philip IV); that he undertook to print the work at Paris, as it would be dangerous to issue it at Madrid; and that, when safely out of range, he translated it into French under his own name.

This may be amusing, but the answer to it is very simple. No corporation of French scholars ever admitted that Lesage was not the author of *Gil Blas*. Isla appeals to the *Nouveau Dictionnaire historique-portatif*, which is said on the title-page to be 'par une Société de Gens de Lettres'; but, as a matter of fact, the *Nouveau Dictionnaire historique-portatif* was compiled by Voltaire's friend, Louis Maïeul Chaudon, and Chaudon confines himself to saying that Lesage 'had little invention, but he had wit, taste, the art of beautifying other men's ideas, and making them his

own.'[1] Isla was manifestly mistaken as to the authority and representative character of the *Nouveau Dictionnaire historique-portatif*, and he deliberately exaggerated the statements contained in it. And so with the rest of his argument: Lesage was never in Spain, and these stories of his friendship with the French Ambassador and of his receiving a Spanish manuscript from an unknown Andalusian are jocose inventions. Isla himself insinuates as much, for he concludes his argument by slyly remarking: 'Che si no sia vero, al meno è bene trovato.' The hint should have been enough for any reader with a sense of humour, but Isla's last joke was taken very seriously in and out of Spain.

He made converts in the most unexpected quarters. The Spanish pretensions were discussed and rejected in 1819 and 1822 by the Comte de Neufchâteau, whose study appears to have been really written by a promising young royalist poet called Victor Hugo.[2] In 1818 Joseph Bocous[3] had outdone Isla by alleging that the Spanish original of *Gil Blas* was then in the library at the Escorial. The statement was without foundation, and is an interesting example of how legends grow. A more precise theory was advanced in 1822 by Juan Antonio Llorente,[4] the historian of the Spanish Inquisition, who contended that *Gil Blas* was a transla-

[1] *Nouveau Dictionnaire historique-portatif.* Par une Société de Gens de Lettres (Amsterdam, 1770), iv, 147.

[2] This attribution is confirmed by a passage in *Les Misérables*, livre vi, chapitre iv (Paris, 1862), vi, 25. 'Elle ne pourrait, cependant, pensait-il, s'empêcher d'avoir de l'estime et de la considération pour moi si elle savait que c'est moi qui suis le véritable auteur de la dissertation sur Marcos de Obregon de la Ronda que Monsieur François de Neufchâteau a mise comme étant de lui, en tête de son édition de *Gil Blas*.'

[3] *Biographie Universelle, Ancienne et Moderne* (Paris, 1811-53), xxi, 294.

[4] *Observaciones críticas sobre el romance de Gil Blas de Santillana* (Madrid, 1822).

tion of a certain *Historia de las aventuras del Bachiller de Salamanca, Don Querubin de la Ronda.* According to Llorente, this story was written by Antonio de Solís y Rivadeneira in 1655, was bought by Hugues de Lyonne (secret envoy at Madrid in 1656), and came into the possession of the Abbé Jules de Lyonne. The Abbé gave it to his friend Lesage, who translated from it both *Gil Blas* and *Le Bachelier de Salamanque.* If Isla's theory was a joke, Llorente at least was desperately in earnest. The disadvantage of his case is that, though stated with some cleverness, it consists mainly of conjectures and assertions. It is instructive to observe how Llorente arrives at his conclusion as to the authorship of the non-existent Spanish manuscript. It cannot, he pleads, be by Moreto, because Moreto is mentioned slightingly in *Gil Blas ;* nor by Calderon, for Calderon is praised to excess in *Gil Blas ;* and, continuing this process of elimination, he ends by excluding all contemporaries except Solís. Now, Solís was a dramatist and historian, a private secretary of Philip IV, and a well-to-do, correct official. There is no reason to suppose that he ever wrote a picaresque story, and by 1655 the vogue of picaresque novels was dwindling in Spain ; but, however that may be, Solís was not so rash and base as to sell to a foreign agent a manuscript story satirizing the foibles of his benefactor.

Llorente insists that the 'local colour' in *Gil Blas* must have been supplied by a Spaniard. This does not seem to be a necessary consequence. Spaniards are prone to take 'local colour' for granted, whereas most vivid descriptions of Spanish life have been written by foreigners like Richard Ford, who was only once in Spain, for a period of rather less than three years. But it so happens that the 'local colour' in *Gil Blas* is rather faint, and what there is of it was common knowledge to every reader of Spanish books. Anyone who had read *Don Quixote* might have known that Spaniards rode on mules, that travellers who went

by coach had escorts, that wine was carried in *botas*, that barbers played the guitar, and that the Holy Brotherhood was active in enforcing the law. Anybody who had read the various books of travel in Spain—even such a 'popular' book as Madame d'Aulnoy's—might have picked up some of the terms used in the bull-ring, or learned that Spaniards drank chocolate, that the Prado was in Madrid, and that the Capilla de los Reyes was at Toledo. Feeling, perhaps, that he was on weak ground, Llorente accounts for errors in *Gil Blas*—errors which (as he declares) no Spaniard could have made—by saying that Lesage misread the manuscript which he received from the Abbé de Lyonne. For example, according to Llorente, there are no such places as Rodillas, Ponte de Mula, Valpuesta, and Luceno, all mentioned in *Gil Blas*. These, he alleges, are mistakes for Revilla, Ponte Dura, Valdestillas, and Luyego. There are a few real oversights and topographical blunders in *Gil Blas;* but Llorente's illustrations are unfortunate. The four places, the existence of which he denies, are given in Sanson's excellent maps of Spain published (1706-1709) by Jaillot, and as Jaillot's shop was in Lesage's quarter of Paris, the author of *Gil Blas* had not far to go for his topographical details. No one expects a novelist like Lesage to be as accurate in such matters as an historian like Llorente; but, indifferent as he often was to minutiae, in these test cases the novelist is clearly right, and the historian is clearly wrong. The simple truth is that the Lyonne manuscript of *Gil Blas* never existed, and therefore Lesage cannot have misread it.

It would be useless and interminable to follow Llorente through his four hundred pages. Misleading as they are, they did a great service to Lesage by opening a discussion which has lasted for more than eighty years, and has led to definite conclusions. The 'Question of *Gil Blas*' may now be answered. It is not true, as Voltaire, Isla, and Llorente pretend, that Gil

Blas is translated from a Spanish original; it is not true, as stated by George Borrow, that *Gil Blas* (which he compares unfavourably with Jerónimo de Alcalá Yañez y Ribera's *Donoso hablador*) is 'a piratical compilation from the works of old Spanish novelists';[1] it is not true that *Gil Blas* embodies the substance of unpublished memoirs relating to the Courts of Philip III and Philip IV.[2] What is true is that Lesage takes his material from a variety of sources. As in *Le Diable boiteux*, he interpolates a digression—the story of Belflor and Leonor de Céspedes—adapted from Rojas Zorrilla's play entitled *Obligados y ofendidos y gorron de Salamanca;* so in *Gil Blas* he takes subjects from the various authors indicated in the notes to the present reprint, and no doubt from other sources which have escaped notice. He draws indifferently on tragedies, comedies, picaresque stories, romantic novels; on Rojas Zorrilla, Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza, Córdoba y Figueroa, Espinel, Castillo Solórzano, and the rest, who in their turn have borrowed from their predecessors. Nor does Lesage limit himself to Spanish writers. As in *Le Bachelier de Salamanque*, he appropriates what suits his purpose from *The English-American, His Travail by Sea and Land* of Thomas Gage, so in *Gil Blas* he utilizes Ferrante Pallavicino's *Il Corriere svaligiato* in André Félibien's translation (1650), as well as Vittorio Siri's *Del Mercurio* in Guillaume de Valdory's rendering (1722), and he unearths at the bookstalls a pamphlet published fifty years earlier at Cöln.[3] As

[1] *The Zincali; or an account of the Gypsies of Spain* (London, 1847), i, 87.

[2] Adolfo de Castro, *El Conde-Duque de Olivares y el Rey Felipe IV* (Cadiz, 1847), 84. Castro suggests that Lesage used a manuscript account of court intrigues by the poet Francisco de Rioja. There is not the least reason to suppose that Rioja ever wrote anything of the kind.

[3] *Histoire du Comte-Duc avec des reflexions politiques et curieuses* (Cologne, 1683).

the theory that Lesage had access to unpublished political memoirs still lingers, it may be as well to show, once for all, how closely he adheres to the text of books which were in everybody's hands. Compare, for instance, the well-known description of Olivares in *Gil Blas* with the description of him in Valdory's translation of Siri :

VALDORY (1722).

'Don Gaspard de Gusman Comte d'Olivarés, étoit d'une taille au-dessus de la médiocre, il avoit assez d'embonpoint pour paroître gros dans un Païs où la maigreur est ordinaire, & les épaules assez élevées pour qu'on le crût bossu, quoiqu'il ne le fût pas effectivement ; il avoit le visage long, les cheveux noirs, la bouche enfoncée, le menton fort relevé, les yeux & le nez ny beaux ny laids, la tête grosse & un peu penchante, le front large, le teint jaunâtre, & le regard rude et menaçant.'[1]

LESAGE (1735).

'Je vis un homme d'une taille au-dessus de la médiocre, & qui pouvoit passer pour gros dans un pays où il est rare de voir des personnes qui ne soient pas maigres. Il avoit les épaules si élevées, que je le crus bossu, quoiqu'il ne le fût pas ; sa tête, qui étoit d'une grosseur excessive, lui tomboit sur la poitrine ; ses cheveux étoient noirs & plats, son visage long, son teint olivâtre, sa bouche enfoncée, & son menton pointu et fort relevé.'[2]

It is superfluous to insist on the resemblance between these two passages, or to give other examples of the same kind. There is nothing recondite in Lesage's sources. He selects what he needs from Jacob Wilhelm Imhof's *Recherches historiques et généalogiques des Grands d'Espagne* (1707), from the Abbé Jean de Vayrac's *État present de l'Espagne* (1718), from the descrip-

[1] *Anecdotes du Ministère du Comte-Duc d'Olivares* (Paris, 1722), 48-9.

[2] *Gil Blas* (Paris, 1747), iv, 203. The passage occurs in Book XI, Chapter ii, (vol. ii, p. 315, of the present reprint).

tions of Spanish life given by Brunel,[1] Bertaut, and the imaginative Madame d'Aulnoy, sometimes following his authorities so faithfully as to reproduce a misprint,[2] but choosing his matter with a fine discretion. On one and all he levies contributions, taking a fact here and a characteristic trait there, improving on his originals, adapting (for instance) the story of the Journeyman Barber from Espinel much as Cervantes adapted the story of the Curious Impertinent from Ariosto. He vitalizes what seemed dead, transforms the particular into the universal, and lights up the whole with a serene irony unlike anything in the cleverest of his exemplars. The tedious parts of *Gil Blas*—the story of Prince Henriquez and Blanche, or the story of Don Alphonso and Seraphina—are precisely those which owe most to the Spanish; the best things in *Gil Blas* are Lesage's own. It is not surprising that, while his casual models are neglected or forgotten, his work endures; for most of what is best in the Spanish picaresque stories is to be found, sweetened and humanized, in the pages of *Gil Blas*.

[1] The book of travels in Spain, usually ascribed to Frans van Aerssen (or Aarssens van Sommelsdijk), appears to be really the work of his travelling companion, Antoine de Brunel.

[2] Llorente (*op. cit.*, 196) rightly states that in Gil Blas (Book XII, Chapter iv) the Alcalde's name should be 'Valcárcel' instead of 'Valdeasar,' which he goes on to describe as 'a word begotten in M. Lesage's head, owing to his having misread the characters of the Spanish manuscript which he copied.' Lesage, however, gives 'Valeasar,' not 'Valdeasar,' and he took 'Valeasar'—not from any Spanish manuscript, but—from the *Relation de ce qui s'est passé en Espagne à la disgrace du Comte-Duc d'Olivares* (Paris, 1650), 139.

III

The scene of *Gil Blas* is laid in Spain, but the tone of the book and the personages presented in it are essentially French. It is idle for Gil Blas to declare that he comes from Oviedo, that he feasted in Spanish houses, and that he was secretary to Lerma and Olivares. The thing is frankly incredible. Gil Blas is more probably a Breton settled in Paris not far from the Rue Saint-Jacques du Haut-Pas, an occasional visitor at the Café Procope opposite the Comédie-Française. The luxurious dinners served to the Licentiate Sedillo, and described with a gusto which gave Sir Walter Scott's epicurean friend an appetite, were never cooked in any Spanish kitchen; and Lerma and Olivares recall the figures of Dubois and Fleury. Sangrado and Andros, those patterns of medical orthodoxy, are the fashionable Parisian physicians Hecquet and Andry; the peppery Cuchillo, who came to fisticuffs with Gil Blas over the body of the grocer's dropsical son, is Procope-Couteaux, another ornament of the Paris faculty; the raddled Ventoleria, over sixty years of age, and ludicrously endeavouring to look younger every day—the player who 'quitted the stage through whim, and now repents in earnest'—is the celebrated actor Baron during the long period of his retirement; the academic Guyomar, who is picked up drunk in the streets by the watch, is the festive Dagoumer, a recognized expert in vintages and philosophy, as becomes the Rector of the University of Paris. And many of the literary stars seen by Gil Blas are unmistakably French. Deslenguado, 'a malicious mortal whose pleasure consists in hating all the world,' is doubtless Jean-Baptiste Rousseau. The company at the Marchioness de Chaves' receptions—the famous 'Mardis' of Madame de Lambert—includes the too exquisite Fontenelle; La Motte, who presented Homer coquettishly patched and powdered; the Abbé de

Bragelonne, 'chéri des Graces et des Muses'; and Madame Dacier, the learned lady whose argumentative pertinacity, says Gil Blas, 'in my opinion, is inconsistent with the fair sex.'[1] All these are far removed from Spain, and are characters unknown to Solís and his brethren.

Some difficult contemporaries blamed Lesage for not introducing his readers to the higher walks of society, and probably the superfine Joubert means nothing more when he complains that Lesage's novels have 'all the appearance of being written in a café by a domino-player on leaving the theatre.' The Cardinal-Duke of Lerma and the Count-Duke of Olivares did not, apparently, reach the standard of social position set up by these fastidious critics. It is, however, doubtful whether the higher walks of society were any better or more interesting than the middle and lower walks in Lesage's time. The morals and manners of the men of the Regency do not invite minute description: they may be inferred from the conduct of the noblest ladies in the Court. It is established that the Duchesse de Vendôme and the Duchesse de Berry were carried to bed drunk every night; that the Duchesse de Maine gambled till dawn with her servants; and that, by steadily cheating at cards, the Maréchale de la Ferté won back from her tradesmen in the evening the money which she had paid them during the day. But this is very much the behaviour of Guyomar and Scipio's master, Don Abel. In any case, Lesage was well advised in describing the society that he knew.

There are no great saints and few execrable villains in his gallery. Gil Blas, the most elaborate of his creations, is an average young man who is captured by thieves, and joins the gang to avoid being murdered.

[1] Gil Blas was not alone in his opinion. Cartaud de la Vilate had ladies of Madame Dacier's type in his mind when he wrote: 'Une femme trop sçavante a quelque chose de trop hommase. Je ne prétens, dit M. de S. Évremond, baiser ni Platon ni Virgile.'

It is not sublime, of course, but the average man is not born with a passion for martyrdom, and the trait is true to life. As Gil Blas rises in the world, his temptations diminish and his morals improve—at least, in externals; but, like the average man, he is a relapsing sinner, and falls when he goes to Court. He takes his colour from his company, is corrupt under the influence of Lerma, and upright under the influence of Olivares. And throughout he is intellectually honest, delightfully free from cant and pose. In spite of Euphrasia's attempts to win him over to her plans, he reveals her perfidy to Don Gonzales, but he does not attribute his action to any innate virtue. He is content to say that 'Euphrasia had made me no positive promise, and that, perhaps, was the occasion of my fidelity's remaining uncorrupted.' There is something refreshing in the rogue's gay candour.

Lesage is not a typical writer of the eighteenth century. He has no sympathy with its rationalistic spirit, no reforming instinct, no belief that human nature will ever be radically different from what it has been. Therefore, he is not a rebel against political or ecclesiastical authority, but he is essentially a critical observer, and in his art he is something of an innovator. In *Gil Blas* he gives us the first novel of manners, introducing into romance the methods of La Bruyère. He has, however, no heroic standard to uphold, wastes no indignation on rascality, finds the world an amusing spectacle, teaches no lesson but the ancient saw that (on the whole) honesty is the best policy, and throws his practical philosophy and shrewd observations into the form of fiction. There is no reason in the nature of things why *Gil Blas* should ever finish, except that the writer himself grows old and tired. He clearly intended to end it at the ninth book, and in the sequel he repeats himself. Scipio is too obviously a double of Gil Blas, and Dorothea is a double of Antonia. These, however, are minor blemishes in a work singularly rich in wisdom, variety, and entertainment. 'If,'

says Sir Walter Scott, 'there is anything like truth in Gray's opinion, that to lie upon a couch and read new novels was no bad idea of Paradise, how would that beatitude be enhanced could human genius afford us another *Gil Blas*!' So readers as diverse as Swift, Catherine of Russia, Sainte-Beuve, and Meissonier have thought: but miracles of this sort do not happen.[1]

JAMES FITZMAURICE-KELLY.

[1] In his *Lives of the Novelists* ('World Classics,' xciv, 63) Scott says that Smollett's name was attached, during his life, 'to a translation of *Gil Blas*, to which it is supposed he contributed little or nothing more.' As we are not informed why this is supposed, Smollett's name is maintained on the title-page of the present reprint.

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THE AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

As there are some people who cannot read, without making applications of the vicious and ludicrous characters they meet with in works of this kind; I declare to these mischievous readers, that they will be to blame, if they apply any of the pictures drawn in this book. I publicly own that my purpose is to represent life as we find it: but God forbid that I should undertake to delineate any man in particular! Let no reader, therefore, assume to himself that which as properly belongs to others; lest, as Phaedrus observes, he make an unlucky discovery of his own character. *Stulte nudabit animi conscientiam*[1]. There are physicians in Castile as well as in France, whose practice consists in evacuating their patients a little too much; and the same vices and peculiarities of disposition are to be seen everywhere. I confess, that I have not always exactly observed the manners of the Spaniards; and those who are acquainted with the disorderly lives of the players at Madrid, may reproach me with having described their irregularities with too much tenderness: but I thought it was necessary to soften them a little, that they might be the more conformable to the manners of our own country.

[1] Phaedrus ad Eutychum, *Fabulae Aesopiae*, III, i, 47.

GIL BLAS TO THE READER

GENTLE reader, before thou hearest the history of my life, give me leave to entertain thee with a short story[1].

Two scholars, in their way from Peñafiel to Salamanca, being thirsty and fatigued, sat down by a spring they met with on the road. There, while they rested themselves, after having quenched their thirst, they perceived by accident, upon a stone that was even with the surface of the earth, some letters, already half effaced by time, and the feet of flocks that came to water at the fountain: having washed it, they read these words in the Castilian tongue: *Aqui está encerrada el alma del Licenciado Pedro Garcias*, 'here is interred the soul of the Licentiate Peter Garcias.' The younger of the two students, being a pert coxcomb, no sooner read this inscription, than he cried with a loud laugh, 'A good joke i' faith; here is interred the soul—a soul interred! Who the devil could be the author of such a wise epitaph?' So saying, he got up and went away: while his companion, who was blessed with a greater share of penetration, said to himself, 'There is certainly some mystery in this affair: I'll stay in order to unriddle it.' Accordingly, his com-

[1] This short story is adapted from the prologue to Vicente Martinez Espinel's *Relaciones de la vida del Escudero Marcos de Obregon* (Madrid, 1618). On the way from Antequera to Salamanca two students halt at a well, and the more serious of the pair observes a slab bearing the cryptic inscription: 'Conditur unio, conditur unio.' He discovers beneath the stone a pearl larger than a nut, and a necklace worth four thousand *escudos*.

rade was no sooner out of sight, than he began to dig with his knife all round the stone; and succeeded so well, that he got it up, and found beneath it a leathern purse, containing a hundred ducats, and a card, on which was written the following sentence in Latin, 'Whosoever thou art who hast wit enough to discover the meaning of the inscription, inherit my money, and make a better use of it than I have done.' The scholar, rejoiced at his good fortune, placed the stone in its former situation, and walked home to Salamanca with the soul of the licentiate.

Of what complexion soever thou mayest be, friendly reader, thou wilt certainly resemble one of those two scholars: for if thou perusest my adventures, without perceiving the moral instructions they contain, thou wilt reap no harvest from thy labour: but if thou readest with attention, thou wilt find in them, according to the precept of Horace, profit mingled with pleasure[1].

[1] Horace, *De Arte Poetica*, 343:

> Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,
> Lectorem delectando pariterque monendo.

THE

ADVENTURES OF GIL BLAS

de Santillana

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

Of the birth and education of Gil Blas

My father, Blas de Santillana, after having carried arms many years for the service of the Spanish monarchy, retired to the town in which he was born, where he chose a wife among the second-rate citizens, who, though she was no chicken, brought me into the world ten months after her marriage. They afterwards removed to Oviedo, where my mother became a waiting-woman, and my father squire to a lady: and as they had nothing but their wages to depend upon, I should have run the hazard of being very poorly educated, had it not been my good fortune to have a canon for my uncle, whose name was Gil Perez. He was my mother's eldest brother as well as my godfather, a little man, three feet and a half high, excessively fat, with his head sunk between his shoulders; otherwise an honest priest, whose chief care was to live well; that is, to make good cheer; and his living, which was no lean one, furnished him with the means.

He carried me home to his house while an infant, taking charge of my education; and I appeared so sprightly, that he resolved to cultivate my genius. With this view he bought for me a hornbook, and

undertook (himself) to learn me to read ; a task no less useful to him than to me : for, in teaching me my letters he had recourse to his reading, which he had always neglected too much, and, by dint of application, enabled himself to read his breviary without hesitation ; a qualification he had never been possessed of before. He had all the inclination in the world to instruct me in the Latin tongue also, because it would have been so much money saved to him : but, alas, poor Gil Perez ! he had never in his life understood the rudiments of that language, and was perhaps (but this I do not vouch for certainty) the most illiterate canon of the whole chapter. I have been told, indeed, that he had not obtained his benefice by his erudition ; but owed it entirely to the gratitude of some pious nuns, for whom he had acted the part of a zealous commissioner, and by whose influence the order of priesthood had been conferred upon him without examination.

He was therefore obliged to subject me to the birch of a schoolmaster, and accordingly sent me to the house of Doctor Godinez, who was reckoned the most expert flogger in Oviedo. I improved so well under his instructions, that in five or six years I understood a little Greek, was a pretty good Latin scholar ; and applying myself also to logic, began to argue apace. I was so much in love with dispute, that I stopped passengers, known or unknown, and proposed arguments to them ; and sometimes meeting with Hibernian geniuses[1], who were very glad of the occasion, it was a good jest to see us dispute : by our extravagant gestures, grimaces, contortions, our eyes full of fury, and our mouths full of foam, one would have taken us for bedlamites rather than philosophers.

By these means, however, I acquired the reputation of a great scholar in town ; a circumstance that pleased my uncle extremely, as he foresaw that I should not be much longer an expense to him. ' Harkee,

[1] *Figures hibernoises :* the Irish who followed James II to France. But they are out of place at Oviedo.

Gil Blas (said he to me one day), thou art no longer a child, and it is high time for a brisk lad of seventeen, like thee, to push thy fortune in the world: I am determined to send thee to Salamanca, where, with such genius and learning, thou canst not fail of obtaining some good post: thou shalt have some ducats in thy pocket to bear thy expenses on the road; and I will give thee my own mule, which thou mayst sell at Salamanca for ten or twelve pistoles, and live upon the money until thou shalt be settled to thy satisfaction.'

He could not have proposed anything more agreeable to me; for I passionately longed to see the world: nevertheless I had discretion enough to conceal my joy; and when the time of my departure arrived, affecting the most lively sorrow at leaving an uncle, to whom I owed so many obligations, the honest man was melted, and gave me more money than he would have done, could he have seen to the bottom of my heart. Before I set out I went to take leave of my father and mother, who enriched me with advice, exhorting me to pray to God for my uncle, to live inoffensively, to eschew evil, and by all means to refrain from stealing. After they had held forth a good while, they made me a present of their blessing, which was all I expected from them; and I, mounting my mule, bade adieu to Oviedo.

CHAPTER II

Of his being grievously alarmed in his way to Peñaflor: of his conduct in that town; with an account of a person who supped with him

Behold me then in the open field, clear of Oviedo, on the road to Peñaflor, master of my own conduct, of a sorry mule, and forty good ducats, exclusive of some reals which I had stolen from my much-honoured uncle. The first thing I did was to let my

beast go at discretion, that is, very gently; and throwing the bridle on her neck, I emptied my purse into my hat, and amused myself in counting my money: my joy was excessive; and as I had never seen so much cash before, I handled and gazed at it with insatiable delight. I had reckoned it, perhaps, twenty times over, when, all of a sudden, my mule raising her head and pricking up her ears, stopped in the middle of the highway. Imagining she was frightened at something, I looked about to see what was the matter, and perceived upon the ground an old hat, turned up, with a rosary of great beads in it; at the same time heard a lamentable voice pronounce these words: 'Mr. Traveller, for God's sake, have pity on a poor maimed soldier; drop, if you please, a few bits into the hat, and you shall be rewarded in heaven.' I turned my eyes immediately on the side from whence the voice issued, and saw, at the root of a bush, about twenty or thirty paces from me, a kind of soldier, who, upon two cross sticks, supported the barrel of a carbine, in my apprehension longer than a pike, with which he seemed to take aim at me[1]: at this apparition, which made me quake for the church's money, I stopped short, and, pocketing my ducats, in a great hurry took out some reals, approached the hat, that was exposed for the reception of extorted charity, and dropped them into it, one after another, that the beggar might see how nobly I used him. He was satisfied with my bounty, and gave me a benediction for every kick that I bestowed on the sides of my mule, in order to get out of his reach; but the plaguy beast, regardless of my impatience, moved not a step the faster, having lost the power of galloping, by a long habit of carrying my uncle at her own leisure.

I did not look upon this adventure as a very favourable omen for my journey; I considered that I might meet with something still worse, before I should arrive at Salamanca; and could not help blaming my uncle's

[1] This episode is probably developed from a hint in *Marcos de Obregon*, Relacion III, Descanso xviii.

imprudence, for having neglected to put me under the direction of a carrier. This, to be sure, was what he ought to have done; but he imagined that, by giving me his mule, my journey would be the less expensive; and he had more regard to that consideration, than to the dangers I might be exposed to on the road. In order therefore to repair his mismanagement, I determined (as soon as I should arrive at Peñaflor) to sell the mule, and take the opportunity of a carrier for Astorga, from whence I could transport myself to Salamanca by the same convenience; for although I had never been out of Oviedo, I was not ignorant of the names of the towns through which I must pass, having informed myself of these things before I set out.

I arrived in safety at Peñaflor, and, halting at the gate of an inn that made a tolerable appearance, I no sooner alighted than the landlord came out, and received me with great civility; he untied my portmanteau with his own hands, and, throwing it on his shoulder, conducted me into a room, while one of his servants led my mule into the stable. This innkeeper, the greatest talker of Asturias, and as ready to relate his own affairs, without being asked, as to pry into those of another, told me that his name was Andrés Corcuelo; that he had served many years in the king's army, in quality of a serjeant; and had quitted the service fifteen months ago, to marry a damsel of Castropol, who (though she was a little swarthy) knew very well how to turn the penny. He said a thousand other things, which I could have dispensed with the hearing of; but after having made me his confidant, he thought he had a right to exact the same condescension from me; and accordingly asked whence I came, whither I was going, and what I was. I was obliged to answer, article by article, because he accompanied every question with a profound bow, and begged me to excuse his curiosity with such a respectful air, that I could not refuse to satisfy him in every particular. This engaged me in a long conversation with him, and gave me occasion to

mention my design, and the reasons I had for disposing of my mule, that I might take the opportunity of a carrier. He approved of my intention, though not in a very succinct manner; for he represented all the troublesome accidents that might befall me on the road, he recounted many dismal stories of travellers, and I was afraid he would never have done: he concluded at length, however, telling me, that if I had a mind to sell my mule, he was acquainted with a very honest jockey who would buy her. I assured him he would oblige me in sending for him; upon which he went in quest of him immediately with great eagerness. It was not long before he returned with his man, whom he introduced to me as a person of exceeding honesty, and we went into the yard all together, where my mule was produced, and passed and repassed before the jockey, who examined her from head to foot, and did not fail to speak very disadvantageously of her. I own there was not much to be said in her praise; but, however, had it been the Pope's mule[1], he would have found some defects in her. He assured me, that she had all the faults a mule could have; and, to convince me of his veracity, appealed to the landlord, who, doubtless, had his reasons for supporting his friend's assertions. 'Well (said this dealer, with an air of indifference), how much money do you expect for this wretched animal?' After the eulogium he had bestowed on her, and the attestation of Señor Corcuelo, whom I believed to be a man of honesty and understanding, I would have given my mule for nothing; and therefore told him I would rely on his integrity; bidding him appraise the beast in his own conscience, and I would stand to the valuation. Upon this he assumed the man of honour, and replied, that in engaging his conscience I took him on the weak side: in good sooth, that did not seem to be his strong side; for instead of valuing her at ten or twelve pistoles, as my uncle had done, he fixed the price at three

[1] The dignity of the Pope's mule may be gathered from Rabelais, *Gargantua*, I, v.

ducats, which I accepted with as much joy as if I had made an excellent bargain.

After having so advantageously disposed of my mule, the landlord conducted me to a carrier, who was to set out next day for Astorga. This muleteer let me know, that he would depart before daybreak, and promised to wake me in time, after we had agreed upon the price, as well as for the hire of a mule as for my board on the road; and when everything was settled between us, I returned to the inn with Corcuelo, who, by the way, began to recount the carrier's history; he told me every circumstance of his character in town, and, in short, was going to stupefy me again with his intolerable loquacity; when, luckily for me, a man of a pretty good appearance prevented my misfortune, by accosting him with great civility. I left them together, and went on, without suspecting that I had the least concern in their conversation.

When I arrived at the inn I called for supper, and, it being a meagre day, was fain to put up with eggs; which while they got ready, I made up to my landlady, whom I had not seen before: she appeared handsome enough, and withal so sprightly and gay, that I should have concluded (even if her husband had not told me so) that her house was pretty well frequented. When the omelet I had bespoke was ready, I sat down to table by myself; and had not yet swallowed the first morsel when the landlord came in, followed by the man who had stopped him in the street. This cavalier, who wore a long sword, and seemed to be about thirty years of age, advanced towards me with an eager air, saying, 'Mr. Student, I am informed that you are that Señor Gil Blas de Santillana, who is the light of philosophy, and ornament of Oviedo! Is it possible that you are that mirror of learning, that sublime genius, whose reputation is so great in this country? You know not (continued he, addressing himself to the innkeeper and his wife), you know not what you possess! You have a treasure in your house! Behold, in this young gentleman, the eighth wonder of the world!' Then

turning to me, and throwing his arms about my neck, 'Forgive (cried he) my transports! I cannot contain the joy that your presence creates!'

I could not answer for some time, because he locked me so close in his arms, that I was almost suffocated for want of breath; and it was not till I had disengaged my head from his embrace, that I replied, 'Señor Cavalier, I did not think my name was known at Peñaflor.' 'How! known! (resumed he in his former strain) we keep a register of all the celebrated names within twenty leagues of us. You in particular are looked upon as a prodigy; and I don't at all doubt, that Spain will one day be as proud of you, as Greece was of her seven sages.' These words were followed by a fresh hug, which I was enforced to endure, though at the risk of strangulation. With the little experience I had, I ought not to have been the dupe of his professions and hyberbolical compliments. I ought to have known, by his extravagant flattery, that he was one of those parasites which abound in every town, and who, when a stranger arrives, introduce themselves to him, in order to fill their bellies at his expense: but my youth and vanity made me judge quite otherwise: my admirer appeared to me so much of a gentleman, that I invited him to take a share of my supper. 'Ah! with all my soul (cried he), I am too much obliged to my kind stars for having thrown me in the way of the illustrious Gil Blas, not to enjoy my good fortune as long as I can! I have no great appetite (pursued he), but I will sit down to bear you company, and eat a mouthful, purely out of complaisance.'

So saying, my panegyrist took his place right over-against me, and, a cover being laid for him, attacked the omelet as voraciously as if he had fasted three whole days: by his complaisant beginning I foresaw that our dish would not last long, and therefore ordered a second; which they dressed with such dispatch, that it was served just as we—or rather he—had made an end of the first. He proceeded on this with the same vigour, and found means, without losing one stroke of

his teeth, to overwhelm me with praises during the whole repast, which made me very well pleased with my sweet self. He drank in proportion to his eating; sometimes to my health, sometimes to that of my father and mother, whose happiness in having such a son as me he could not enough admire. In the meantime he plied me with wine, and insisted upon my doing him justice, while I toasted health for health; a circumstance which, together with his intoxicating flattery, put me into such good humour, that, seeing our second omelet half devoured, I asked the landlord if he had no fish in the house. Señor Corcuelo, who, in all likelihood, had a fellow-feeling with the parasite, replied, 'I have a delicate trout; but those who eat it must pay for the sauce: 'tis a bit too dainty for your palate, I doubt.' 'What do you call too dainty? (said the sycophant, raising his voice) you're a wiseacre, indeed! know that there is nothing in this house too good for Señor Gil Blas de Santillana, who deserves to be entertained like a prince.'

I was pleased at his laying hold of the landlord's last words, in which he prevented me, who finding myself offended, said, with an air of disdain, 'Produce this trout of yours, gaffer Corcuelo, and give yourself no trouble about the consequence.' This was what the innkeeper wanted: he got it ready, and served it up in a trice. At sight of this new dish, I could perceive the parasite's eyes sparkle with joy; and he renewed that complaisance—I mean for the fish,—which he had already shown for the eggs. At last, however, he was obliged to give out, for fear of accident, being crammed to the very throat: having therefore eaten and drank his bellyful, he thought proper to conclude the farce by rising from table, and accosting me in these words, 'Señor Gil Blas, I am too well satisfied with your good cheer to leave you, without offering an important advice, which you seem to have great occasion for: henceforth beware of praise, and be upon your guard against everybody you do not know. You may meet with other people inclined to divert

themselves with your credulity, and perhaps to push things still farther; but don't be duped again, nor believe yourself (though they should swear it) the eighth wonder of the world.' So saying, he laughed in my face and stalked away[1]. I was as much affected by this bite as I have since been by misfortunes of far greater consequence. I could not forgive myself for having been so grossly imposed upon; or rather, I was shocked to find my pride so humbled: 'How! (said I to myself) has the traitor then made a jest of me? His design in accosting my landlord in the street was only to pump him; or perhaps they understand one another! Ah, simple Gil Blas! Go hang thyself for shame, for having given such rascals an opportunity of turning thee into ridicule! I suppose they'll trump up a fine story of this affair, which will reach Oviedo, and doubtless do thee a great deal of honour; and make thy parents repent their having thrown away so much good counsel on an ass: instead of exhorting me not to wrong anybody, they ought to have cautioned me against the knavery of the world!' Chagrined with these mortifying reflections, and inflamed with resentment, I locked myself in my chamber, and went to bed, where however I did not sleep; for, before I could close my eyes, the carrier came to let me know that he was ready to set out, and only waited for me: I got up instantly, and while I put on my clothes Corcuelo brought me a bill, in which, I assure you, the trout was not forgotten: and I was not only obliged to gratify his exorbitance, but I had also the mortification to perceive, while I counted the money, that the sarcastic knave remembered my adventure. After having paid sauce for a supper, which I had so ill digested, I went to the muleteer with my bags, wishing the parasite, the innkeeper, and his inn at the devil.

[1] This mortifying adventure with the parasite, grown insolent after a good meal, is adapted from *Marcos de Obregon*, Relacion I, Descanso ix.

CHAPTER III

Of the carrier's temptation on the road, and its consequence: how Gil Blas, in attempting to get out of the frying-pan, fell into the fire

I WAS not the only person who travelled with the carrier, there being in company two children belonging to a gentleman at Peñaflor, a little strolling ballad-singer of Mondoñedo, and a young tradesman of Astorga, who was bringing home a girl whom he had married at Verco. We became acquainted with one another presently, and every one, in a very short time, told whence he came, and whither he was going. The new-married lady was so stupid and tawny, that I had no great pleasure in looking at her; but her youth and plumpness had a different effect upon the carrier, who resolved to make an attempt upon her inclinations. He spent the whole day in projecting this noble design, the execution of which he deferred until we should arrive at our last stage, which happened to be at Cacabelos[1]. He accordingly made us alight at the first inn we came to, a house situated rather in the country than in the town, the landlord of which he knew to be a complaisant and discreet person. He took care to have us conducted into a remote apartment, where he allowed us to sup in tranquillity; but when our meal was ended, he entered with a furious look, crying, 'Blood and oons! I am robbed of one hundred pistoles, which I had in a leathern bag, and I must find them immediately, otherwise I will apply to the magistrate of the place, who is no joker in these matters, and have you all put to the rack, till such time as you confess the crime and restore the money.' Having pronounced these dreadful words with a very natural air, he went out, leaving us all in the utmost consternation.

[1] The original of this carrier is introduced in *Marcos de Obregon*, Relacion I, Descanso x.

As we were strangers to one another, none of us had the least suspicion of the finesse; for my own part I suspected that the poor ballad-singer had done the deed; and perhaps he had the same opinion of me. Besides, we were all raw fools, utterly ignorant of the formalities used in such cases, and believed in good earnest that the process would be begun by putting us all to the torture. Giving way therefore to our fear, we evacuated the room in a great hurry, some running into the street, others flying into the garden, and every one betaking himself to his heels for safety. Among the rest the young tradesman of Astorga, as much scared as any of us at the thoughts of the torture, made his escape, like another Æneas, without incommoding himself with his wife. It was then that the carrier (as I have since learned), more incontinent than his mules, and overjoyed to see his stratagem succeed according to his expectation, went to the bride, boasted of his own ingenuity, and endeavoured to profit by the occasion: but this Lucrece of Asturias, to whom the villanous aspect of her tempter lent new strength, made a vigorous resistance, and screamed most powerfully. The patrol, which happened at that instant to pass by the house, that they knew deserved their attention, went in and demanded the reason of those cries: upon which the landlord, who sat singing in the kitchen, and pretended to know nothing of the matter, was obliged to conduct the officer and his guard into the chamber of the person who made the noise. They arrived very seasonably, the chaste Asturian being quite exhausted; and the commander (who was none of the most delicate people in the world) perceiving what was the matter, gave the amorous muleteer a wooden salutation with the handle of his halbert, addressing him at the same time in terms as inconsistent with modesty as the action that suggested them. This was not all: he apprehended the criminal, and carried him before the judge, together with his accuser; who, notwithstanding her disorder, would have gone of herself to crave justice

for the outrage that was committed upon her. The magistrate having heard, and attentively considered the cause, found the defendant guilty, caused him to be stripped and scourged in his presence; and ordered that, if the husband of the plaintiff should not appear before next day, she should be escorted to Astorga by two horsemen, at the charge of the delinquent.

As for me, more terrified, perhaps, than the rest, I got into the country, and crossing I don't know how many fields and heaths, and leaping all the ditches I found in my way, I arrived at last at the side of a wood, and was just going into it, with a view of concealing myself in some thicket, when, all of a sudden, two men on horseback appeared before me, and called, 'Who goes there?' As my surprise hindered me from making immediate answer, they advanced, and each clapping a pistol to my throat, commanded me to tell who I was, whence I came, my business in that forest, and, above all things, to hide nothing from them. To these interrogations, the manner of which seemed to me equal to the rack with which the carrier had threatened us, I replied, that I was a lad of Oviedo, going to Salamanca; recounted the alarm we had undergone, and confessed, that the fear of being put to the torture had induced me to run away. They burst out into a loud laugh at this discovery, which manifested the simplicity of my heart; and one of them said, 'Take courage, friend; come along with us, and fear nothing: we will put thee in a place of safety.' So saying, he made me get up behind him, and then we retreated into the wood.

Though I did not know what to make of this encounter, I did not presage anything bad from it; for (said I to myself) if these people were thieves, they would have robbed, and perhaps murdered me, at once: they must certainly be honest gentlemen, who live hard by, and who, seeing me in a panic, have pity on my condition, and carry me home with them out of charity. But I did not long remain in suspense; for, after several windings and turnings, which

we performed in great silence, we came to the foot of a hill, where we alighted; and one of the horsemen said to me, 'This is our dwelling-place.' I looked around, but could perceive neither house, hut, nor the least appearance of any habitation: nevertheless, these two men lifted up a huge wooden trap-door, covered with earth and brambles, which concealed the entrance of a long shelving passage underground, into which the horses went of themselves, like beasts that were used to it; while the cavaliers, taking the same path, made me follow them: then lowering the cover, with cords fastened to the inside for that purpose, behold the worthy kinsman of my uncle Perez, caught like a mouse in a trap.

CHAPTER IV

A description of the subterranean habitation, and of what Gil Blas observed therein[1]

I now discovered my situation, and anyone may easily believe that this discovery effectually dispelled my former fear: a terror more mighty, and better founded, took possession of my soul! I laid my account with losing my life as well as my ducats; and looking upon myself as a victim led to the altar, walked (more dead than alive) between my two conductors, who, feeling me tremble, exhorted me in vain to fear nothing. When we had gone about two hundred paces, turning and descending all the way, we entered into a stable, lighted by two great iron lamps hanging from the arch above. Here I saw plenty of straw, and a good many casks full of provender: there was room enough for twenty horses; but at that time there were only the two that we brought along with us,

[1] A similar cavern, used by thieves near Sauceda, is described in *Marcos de Obregon*, Relacion III, Descanso xviii.

which an old negro, who seemed vigorous for his years, was tying to a rack. We went out of the stable, and by the dismal glimmer of some lamps, that seemed to lighten the place, only to show the horrors of it, came to a kitchen, where an old cook-maid was busy in broiling steaks, and providing for supper. The kitchen was adorned with all necessary utensils, and hard by there was a larder stored with all sorts of provision. The cook (for I must draw her picture) was a person somewhat turned of sixty: in her youth the hair of her head had been red as a carrot; for time had not as yet so much bleached it, but that one might still perceive some shades of its primitive colour: she had an olive complexion, a chin pointed and prominent, with lips fallen in, a huge aquiline nose that hung over her mouth, and eyes that flamed in purple.

'Well, Dame Leonarda (said one of the gentlemen presenting me to this fair angel of darkness), here's a young man we have brought for you.' Then turning to me, and observing me pale and dismayed, 'Friend (said he), banish thy fear; we will do thee no harm. Having occasion for a servant to assist our cook-maid, we met with thee, and happy is it for thee we did: thou shalt here supply the place of a young fellow, who let himself die about fifteen days ago: he was a lad of a very delicate complexion; but thou seemest to be more robust, and wilt not die so soon: indeed thou wilt never see the light of the sun again; but in lieu of that, thou shalt have good cheer, and a rousing fire. Thou shalt pass thy time with Leonarda, who is a very gentle creature, and enjoy all thy little conveniencies. I will show thee (added he), that thou hast not got among beggars.' With these words he took up a flambeau, and, bidding me follow him, carried me into a cellar, where I saw an infinite number of bottles and jars well corked, which (he told me) were filled with excellent wine. He afterwards made me pass through divers apartments, some of which contained bales of linen, others of silks and stuffs: in

one I perceived gold and silver, and a great quantity of plate in different cupboards. Then I followed him into a large hall, illuminated by three branches of copper, which also gave light to the rooms that communicated with it: here he put fresh questions to me; asked my name, and reason for leaving Oviedo; and when I had satisfied his curiosity in these particulars, 'Well, Gil Blas (said he), since thy design in quitting the place of thy nativity was to obtain some good post, thou must certainly have been born with a caul upon thy head; because thou hast fallen into our hands. I have already told thee, that thou shalt live here in affluence, and roll upon gold and silver: nay more, thou shalt be safe; for such is the contrivance of this retreat, that the officers of the Holy Brotherhood[1] may come into the wood a hundred times without discovering it. The entry is unknown to every living soul, except me and my comrades: perhaps thou wilt wonder how it could be executed without being perceived by the people in the neighbourhood! know then, my lad, that this is not a work of our hands, but was made many years ago; for after the Moors had got possession of Granada, Aragon, and almost the whole of Spain, the Christians, rather than submit to the yoke of infidels, fled and concealed themselves in this country, in Biscay, and in Asturias, whither the valiant Don Pelayo retired[2]: fugitives, and dispersed in small numbers, they lived in mountains and woods; some lurked in caves, and others contrived many subterranean abodes, of which number this is one. Having afterwards been so lucky as to drive their enemies out of Spain, they returned into the towns; and, since that time, their retreats have served for asylums to people of our profession. 'Tis true, indeed, the Holy Brotherhood have discovered

[1] The Holy Brotherhood was organized as a police force in 1476 by Ferdinand of Aragon's natural brother, the Duke of Villahermosa.

[2] Pelagius (or Pelayo), the successor of Roderick, defeated the Arabs at Covadonga in 718.

and destroyed some of them; but there are still plenty remaining; and (thank heaven) I have lived here in safety near fifteen years: my name is Captain Rolando[1]: I am chief of the company, and he whom thou sawest with me, is one of my gang.'

CHAPTER V

Of the arrival of more thieves in the subterranean habitation, and the agreeable conversation that happened among them

Señor Rolando had scarce done speaking, when six new faces appeared in the hall; these were the lieutenant with five of the company, who returned loaded with booty, which consisted of two hampers full of sugar, cinnamon, pepper, dried figs, almonds and raisins: the lieutenant addressing himself to the captain, told him, that he had taken these hampers from a grocer of Benavente, whose mule he had also carried off. When he had given an account of his expedition to his superior, the pillage of the grocer was ordered into the store, and it was unanimously agreed to make merry. A table being covered in the great hall, I was sent back into the kitchen, where Dame Leonarda instructed me in the nature of my office; and yielding to necessity (since my cruel fate had so ordained), I suppressed my sorrow, and prepared myself for the service of those worthy gentlemen.

My first essay was on the sideboard, which I adorned with silver cups, and many stone-bottles of that good wine which Señor Rolando had praised so much. I afterwards brought in two ragouts, which were no sooner served, than the whole company sat down to eat. They began with a good appetite, while I stood behind, ready to supply them with wine;

[1] The Rolandos appear to have won a lawsuit against the family of Lesage; representatives of the Rolando family resided at Sarzeau as late as 1847.

and acquitted myself so handsomely, that I had the honour to be complimented upon my behaviour. The captain recounted my story in a few words, which afforded a good deal of diversion, and afterwards observed that I did not want merit: but I was at that time cured of my vanity, and could hear myself praised without danger. Not one of them was silent on the subject; they said, I seemed born to be their cup-bearer; that I was worth a hundred of my predecessor; and although Dame Leonarda (since his death) had been honoured with the office of presenting nectar to those infernal gods, they deprived her of that glorious employment with which they invested me, like a young Ganymede succeeding an ancient Hebe.

A great dish of roast meat, served up after the ragouts, finished the repast of those gormandizing thieves, who, drinking in proportion to their gluttony, soon became frolicsome, made a hellish noise, and spoke all together: one began a story, another broke a jest, a third shouted, a fourth sung; so that there was nothing but riot and confusion! At length Rolando, tired of a scene in which he was so little regarded, called (with a voice that silenced the whole company), 'Gentlemen, I have a proposal to make: instead of stunning one another in this manner, by speaking all together, would it not be better to entertain ourselves like reasonable creatures? There is a thought come into my head: since the time of our association, we have never had the curiosity to know what families we are derived from, and by what train of adventures we have been severally led to embrace this way of life: as these things seem worthy to be known, let us, for our diversion, communicate to one another.' The lieutenant, and the rest, as if they had something very entertaining to relate, embraced, with great demonstrations of joy, the proposal of their chief, who began his own history in these words.

'Gentlemen, you must know that I am the only son of a rich citizen of Madrid: the day of my birth was celebrated in the family by vast rejoicings; my father,

pretty well stricken in years, was ravished at sight of an heir, and my mother undertook to suckle me at her own breasts: her father, who was still alive, was a good old man, who meddled with nothing but his beads, and recounted his own warlike exploits, having been many years in the army; so that becoming insensibly the idol of these three persons, I was incessantly dandled in their arms. Lest study should fatigue me in my tender years, I was allowed to spend them in the most childish amusements; my father observing that children ought not to apply seriously to anything, until time should have ripened the understanding. In expectation of this maturity, I neither learned to read nor write, but, nevertheless, made good use of my time: for my father taught me a thousand different games: I became perfectly acquainted with cards, was no stranger to dice; and my grandfather filled my head with romantic stories of the military expeditions in which he had been concerned. He sung the same catches over and over, and when I had got ten or twelve lines by heart, by dint of hearing them repeated for three months together, my memory became a subject for admiration to my parents, who seemed no less satisfied with my genius. When, profiting by the liberty I enjoyed of speaking what came uppermost, I used to interrupt their discourse with my nonsensical prattle, 'Ah! what a charming creature it is!' (would my father cry, looking at me with inexpressible delight) while my mamma overwhelmed me with caresses, and my old grandsire wept with joy. I committed, in their presence, the most indecent actions with impunity: everything was forgiven; and in short, they adored me. In the meantime, having attained my twelfth year, without being put to a school, a master was at length provided: but he received precise orders, to instruct me without using any violence, being only permitted to threaten me sometimes, with a view of inspiring me with awe. This permission had not the most salutary effects upon me, who either laughed at his menaces, or, with tears

in my eyes, went and complained to my mother and grandpapa of his barbarity. It was in vain for the poor devil to deny the accusation, he was looked upon as a tyrant, and my assertion always believed, in spite of his remonstrance. I happened one day to scratch myself, upon which, setting up my pipes, as if he had flayed me, my mother came running in, and turned my master out of doors, though he protested and took heaven to witness, that he had not touched my skin.

'In the same manner I got rid of all my preceptors, until such a one as I wanted presented himself: this was a bachelor of Alcalá: an excellent tutor for a person of fashion's child! He was a lover of play, women and wine, consequently the fittest person in the world for me. The first thing he set about, was to gain my affection, in which he succeeded, and, by these means, gained the love of my parents, who left me entirely to his management: indeed they had no cause to repent of their confidence; for, in a very little time, he made me perfect in the knowledge of the world: by dint of carrying me along with him, to the places he frequented, I imbibed his taste so well, that, except in Latin, I became a universal proficient; and when I found I had no further occasion for his instructions, he went to offer them elsewhere.

'If, during my childhood, I had lived pretty freely, it was quite another thing, when I became master of my own actions: I every moment ridiculed my parents, who did nothing but laugh at my sallies, which were the more agreeable, the more insolence they contained. Meanwhile, I committed all kinds of debauchery, in the company of other young men of the same disposition; and as our parents did not supply us with money sufficient to support such a delicious life, every one pilfered what he could, at his own home; but that being also insufficient, we began to rob in the dark; when, unfortunately, the corregidor got notice of us, and would have caused us to be apprehended, had we not been informed of his treacherous design. Upon which we consulted our safety in flight, and transferred

the scene of our exploits to the highway. Since which time, gentlemen, God has given me grace to grow old in my profession, in spite of the dangers to which it is exposed.'

Here the captain left off speaking, and the lieutenant, taking his turn, began with 'Gentlemen, an education quite opposite to that of Señor Rolando has, nevertheless, produced the same effect. My father was a butcher of Toledo, reckoned the greatest brute in the whole city, and my mother's disposition not much more gentle. While I was a child, they whipped me, as if it had been through emulation, at the rate of a thousand stripes a day: the least fault I committed was attended with the most severe chastisement; and it was in vain for me to ask pardon, with tears in my eyes, and protest that I was sorry for what I had done; far from being forgiven, I was often punished without cause; while my father belaboured me, my mother (as if he had not exerted himself), instead of interceding for her child, frequently came to his assistance. This treatment inspired me with such aversion for my paternal habitation, that I ran away before I had attained my fourteenth year, and, taking the road of Aragon, went to Saragossa, subsisting on charity by the way. There I consorted with beggars, who led a pretty comfortable life; they taught me to counterfeit blindness, to appear lame, and afflict my limbs with fictitious ulcers, etc. In the morning (like players, who disguise themselves, in order to appear upon the stage), we prepared ourselves for the different parts we intended to act, and every one ran to his post: in the evening we met again, and enjoyed ourselves all night, at the expense of those who had compassion on us in the day. Tired, however, of living among those wretches, and ambitious of appearing in a higher sphere, I associated myself with some knights of the post, who taught me a great many stratagems; but we were, in a very short time, obliged to quit Saragossa, having quarrelled with a certain justice, whose protection we had enjoyed. Every one took his own course: for my

own part, I engaged myself in a company of brave fellows, who put travellers under contribution, and liked their manner of living so well, that, hitherto, I have never felt the least inclination to seek another: I am therefore, gentlemen, very much obliged to the barbarity of my parents; for, had they treated me a little less savagely, instead of being an honourable lieutenant, I should have been doubtless, at this day, a miserable butcher.'

The next that spoke was a young thief, who, sitting between the captain and lieutenant, said, 'Gentlemen, the stories we have heard, are neither so complicated, nor so curious as mine. I owe my being to a peasant's wife, who lived in the neighbourhood of Seville: three weeks after she had brought me into the world (being still young, handsome and healthy), it was proposed to her, to nurse a man of quality's only son, lately born in Seville. This proposal my mother cheerfully accepted, and went to fetch the child, which being committed to her care, she no sooner brought it home to her house, than perceiving some small resemblance between us, she was tempted to make me pass for the infant of quality, in hopes that she should one day be well rewarded by me, for that kind office: my father, who was not more scrupulous than his neighbours, approved of the deceit; so that, after having made us exchange our swaddling-clothes, the son of Don Rodrigo de Herrera was sent to another nurse, under my name, and my mother suckled me under his.

'Notwithstanding all the fine things that are said of instinct and the force of blood, the little gentleman's parents swallowed the change with great ease: they had not the least suspicion of the trick that was played upon them; for, till I was seven years old, I was scarce ever out of their arms. Their intention being to make me a complete cavalier, all sorts of masters were provided; but I had no great inclination for the exercises I learned; and still less relish for the sciences they explained: I loved much better to game with the servants, for whose company, I frequented the kitchen

and stable: but play was not long my predominant passion; for before I was seventeen years of age, I got drunk daily, seduced all the women in the house, but attached myself chiefly to a cook-maid, who seemed to merit my principal regard. She was a fat, jolly wench, whose pleasantry and sleekness pleased me much; and I made love to her, with so little circumspection, that Don Rodrigo himself perceived it. He reprimanded me sharply, reproached me with the baseness of my inclinations, and, lest the sight of this amiable object should render his remonstrances ineffectual, turned my princess out of doors.

'I was disgusted at this piece of conduct, for which I resolved to be revenged: with this view, I stole his lady's jewels, and running in quest of my fair Helen, who had retired to the house of a washerwoman of her acquaintance, I carried her off, at noonday, to the end that nobody might be ignorant of my passion. That was not all: I conducted her into her own country, where I married her in a solemn manner, that I might not only give Herrera the more vexation, but also afford such a worthy example to the children of noblemen. Three months after my marriage, I was informed of Don Rodrigo's death; a piece of news I did not receive with indifference; but repairing instantly to Seville, in order to demand his estate, I found things strangely altered! My mother, who was dead, had been silly enough, on her death-bed, to confess the whole affair, in presence of the curate of the village, and other credible witnesses; in consequence of which, the true son of Don Rodrigo was already in possession of my place, or rather of his own; and had been received with the more joy, on account of their being dissatisfied with me. Wherefore, having nothing to expect from that quarter, and no longer feeling any inclination for my fat spouse, I joined some gentlemen of the road, with whom I began my expeditions.'

The young robber having ended his story, another informed us, that he was the son of a merchant at

Burgos, and, prompted by an indiscreet devotion, had taken the habit, and professed a very austere order, from which, in a few years, he apostatized. In short, these eight highwaymen spoke in their turns, and when I had heard them all, I was not at all surprised to find them together. The discourse was afterwards changed ; they brought upon the carpet several projects for their next excursion ; and having come to a determination, got up from table, in order to go to rest. Having lighted their wax candles, and withdrawn, I followed Captain Rolando into his chamber, where, while I helped to undress him, 'Well, Gil Blas (said he), thou seest how we live : we are always merry, and hatred and envy never get footing among us : we never have the least quarrel with one another, but are more united than a convent of monks : thou wilt, my child (pursued he), lead a very agreeable life in this place ; for I don't believe thee fool enough to boggle at living with robbers : eh ! dost thou think there are any honester people in the world than we ? no, my lad, every one loves to prey upon his fellows : it is a universal principle, though variously exerted : conquerors (for example) seize upon the territories of their neighbours ; people of quality borrow without any intention of repaying ; bankers, treasurers, exchange-brokers, clerks, and all kinds of merchants, great and small, are not a whit more conscientious. As for your limbs of the law, I need not mention them ; everybody knows what they can do : I must own, however, that they are somewhat more humane than we ; for we often put innocent people to death, and they sometimes save the lives of the guilty.'

CHAPTER VI

Of the attempt of Gil Blas to make his escape, and the success thereof

When the captain of the thieves had made this apology for his profession, he went to bed, and I returned into the hall, where I uncovered the table, and put everything in order: from thence I went into the kitchen, where Domingo (so was the old negro called) expected me to supper. Though I had no appetite, I sat down with them; but as I could not eat, and appeared as melancholy as if I had cause to be so, these two apparitions, equally qualified, undertook to give me consolation: 'Why do you afflict yourself, child? (said the old lady) you ought rather to rejoice at your good fortune. You are young, and seem to be of an easy temper; consequently would have been, in a little time, lost in the world: there you would have fallen into the hands of libertines, who would have engaged you in all manner of debauchery: whereas here your innocence finds a secure haven.' 'Dame Leonarda is in the right (said the old blackamoor with great gravity), and let me add, the world is full of affliction: thank heaven, therefore, my friend, for having delivered thee all at once from the dangers, difficulties, and misery of life.'

I bore their discourse with patience, because to fret myself would have done me no service: at last Domingo, having eaten and drank plentifully, retired into the stable; while Leonarda, with a lamp in her hand, conducted me into a vault, which served as a burying-place to the robbers who died a natural death, and in which I perceived a miserable truckle-bed, that looked more like a tomb than a couch: 'Here is your bed-chamber (said she): the lad, whose place you have the good fortune to supply, slept here, as long as he lived among us; and now that he is dead, rests in the same place. He slipped away in the flower of his age:

I hope you will not be so simple as to follow his example.' So saying, she put the light into my hand, and returned into her kitchen; while I, setting the lamp upon the ground, threw myself upon the bed, not so much in expectation of enjoying the least repose, as with a view to indulge my melancholy reflection. 'O heavens (cried I), was ever destiny so terrible as mine! I am banished from the sight of the sun; and, as if it was not enough to be buried alive at the age of eighteen, I am moreover condemned to serve thieves, to spend the day among highwaymen, and the night among the dead!' I wept bitterly over these suggestions, which seemed to me—and were in effect—extremely shocking. A thousand times I cursed my uncle's design of sending me to Salamanca: I repented of my flying from justice at Cacabelos, and even wished I had submitted to the torture. But recollecting that I consumed myself in vain complaints, to no purpose, I began to think of some means by which I might escape. 'What! (said I to myself) is it then impossible to deliver myself? the thieves are asleep, the cook-maid and negro will be in the same condition presently: can't I, while they are all quiet, by the help of my lamp, find out the passage through which I descended to this infernal abode? 'Tis true, indeed, I don't think myself strong enough to lift the trap-door that covers the entry; but however, that I may have nothing to reproach myself with, I will try: my despair will, perhaps, supply me with strength, and who knows but I may accomplish it?'

Having then projected this great design, I got up when I imagined Leonarda and Domingo were at rest; and taking the lamp in my hand, went out of the vault, recommending myself to all the saints in heaven. It was not without great difficulty that I found again all the windings of this new labyrinth, and arrived at the door of the stable; where, at last perceiving the passage I was in search of, I went into it, advancing towards the trap with as much nimbleness as joy: but, alas! in the middle of the entry I met with a

cursed iron grate, fast locked, and consisting of strong bars so close to one another, that I could scarce thrust my hand between them. I was confounded at sight of this new obstacle, which I had not observed when I came in, the grate being then open: I did not fail, however, to feel the bars and examine the lock, which I even attempted to force; when, all of a sudden, I felt across my shoulders five or six hearty thwacks with a bull's pizzle! upon which I uttered such a dreadful yell, that the whole cavern echoed with the sound; and looking behind me, perceived the old negro in his shirt, with a dark lantern in one hand, and the instrument of his execution in the other. 'Ah ha! Mr. Jackanapes, (said he) you want to make your escape, hah! You must not imagine that I am to be caught napping; I heard you all the while. I suppose you thought the grate was open, didn't you? Know, my boy, that henceforth thou shalt always find it shut; and that when we detain anybody here, against his inclination, he must be more cunning than thou, if ever he gets off.'

In the meantime two or three of the thieves, starting out of their sleep at the noise of my cries, and believing that the Holy Brotherhood was coming souse upon them, got up in a hurry, and alarmed their companions. In an instant all were a-foot, and, seizing their swords and carbines, advanced half naked to the place where Domingo chastised me; but they no sooner understood the cause of the noise they had heard, than their uneasiness was changed into fits of laughter. 'How, Gil Blas (said the apostate thief to me), thou hast not been here six hours, and wantest to take thy leave of us already! sure thou must have a great aversion to a retired life, hah! What wouldest thou do, if thou wert a Carthusian friar? Go to bed; thou art quit for once, on account of the stripes Domingo has bestowed on thee; but if ever thou shouldest make another effort to escape, by St. Bartholomew! we will flay thee alive.' This said, he withdrew; the other thieves retired into their apart-

ments; the old negro, proud of his exploit, returned into his stable; and I sneaked back to my Golgotha, where I spent the remaining part of the night in sighs and tears.

CHAPTER VII

Of the behaviour of Gil Blas, when he could do no better

During the first days of my captivity I was like to sink under the sorrow that oppressed me, and might have been said to die by inches; but at last my good genius inspired me with the resolution to dissemble: I affected to appear less sad than usual; I began to laugh and sing, though, God knows, with an aching heart. In a word, I counterfeited so well, that Leonarda and Domingo were deceived, and believed that the bird was at last reconciled to his cage. The robbers were of the same opinion; for I assumed a gay air when I filled wine for them, and mingled in their conversation, whenever I found an opportunity of acting the buffoon. This freedom, far from displeasing, afforded them diversion. 'Gil Blas (said the captain to me one evening, while I entertained them in this manner), thou hast done well, my lad, to banish thy melancholy: I am charmed with thy wit and humour: I find people are not known all at once; for I did not think thou hadst been so sprightly and good-natured.'

The rest joined also in my praise, and appeared so well satisfied with me, that taking the advantage of this good disposition, 'Gentlemen (said I), allow me to tell my mind: since my abode in this place I find myself quite another sort of a person than heretofore. You have divested me of the prejudices of education, and I insensibly imbibe your disposition: I have a taste for your profession, and a longing desire of being honoured with the name of your companion, and of sharing the dangers of your expeditions.' All the com-

pany approved of my discourse, and commended my forwardness; so that it was unanimously resolved to let me serve a little longer, in order to approve myself worthy, then carry me out in their excursions; after which I should obtain the honourable place I demanded.

Well, then I was obliged to persist in my dissimulation, and exercise the post of cup-bearer still; a circumstance that mortified me extremely: for my design in aspiring to the honour of becoming a thief, was only to have the liberty of taking the air with the rest, in hopes that one day I should be able to escape from them, in the course of their expeditions. This hope alone supported my life; but nevertheless appeared so distant, that I tried more than once to baffle the vigilance of Domingo; though it was never in my power, he being always so much upon his guard, that I would have defied an hundred Orpheuses to charm such a Cerberus. 'Tis true, indeed, I did not do all that I could have done to beguile him, lest I should have wakened his suspicion; for he had a hawk's eye over me, and I was obliged to act with the utmost circumspection, that I might not betray myself. I therefore resigned myself to my fate, until the time should be expired that was prescribed by the robbers for receiving me into their gang; and this event I expected as impatiently as if I had been to be enrolled in a list of commissioners.

Heaven be praised! in six months that time arrived; when Señor Rolando, addressing himself to his company, said, 'Gentlemen, we must keep our words with Gil Blas: I have no bad opinion of that young fellow, and I hope we shall make something of him: it is therefore my opinion, that we carry him along with us to-morrow to gather laurels on the highway, and usher him into the path of glory.' The robbers agreed to their captain's proposal; and to show that they already looked upon me as one of their companions, from that moment dispensed with my service, and re-established Dame Leonarda in the office she had

lost on my account. They made me throw away my habit, that consisted of a sorry threadbare short cassock, and dressed me in the spoils of a gentleman whom they had lately robbed; after which I prepared for my first campaign.

CHAPTER VIII

Gil Blas accompanies the thieves, and performs an exploit on the highway

It was in the month of September, when, towards the close of the night, I came out of the cavern in company with the robbers, armed like them, with a carbine, two pistols, sword and bayonet, and mounted on a pretty good horse, which they had taken from the same gentleman whose dress I wore. I had lived so long in darkness, that when day broke I was dazzled with the light, which however soon became familiar to my eyes.

Having passed hard by Ponferrada, we lay in ambush in a small wood which bordered on the road to Leon. There we waited, expecting that fortune would throw some good luck in our way, when we perceived a Dominican (contrary to the custom of these good fathers) riding upon a sorry mule. 'God be praised (cried the captain laughing), there's the *coup d'essai* of Gil Blas: let him go and unload that monk, while we observe his behaviour.' All the rest were of opinion that this was a very proper commission for me, and exhorted me to acquit myself handsomely in it. 'Gentlemen (said I), you shall be satisfied: I will make that priest as bare as my hand, and bring hither his mule in a twinkling.' 'No, no (replied Rolando), she is not worth the trouble: bring us only the purse of his reverence; that is all we expect of thee.' For this purpose I sallied from the wood, and made towards the clergyman, begging heaven, all the way, to pardon the action I was about to commit. I would gladly

have made my escape that moment; but the greatest part of the thieves were better mounted than I, and, had they perceived me running away, would have been at my heels in an instant, and entrapped me again in a very short time, or perhaps discharged their carbines at me; in which case I should have had nothing to brag of. Not daring therefore to hazard such a delicate step, I came up with the priest, and clapping a pistol to his breast, demanded his purse. He stopped short to survey me, and without seeming much afraid. 'Child (said he), you are very young: you have got a bad trade by the hand, betimes.' 'Bad as it is, father (I replied), I wish I had begun it sooner.' 'Ah! son, son (said the good friar, who did not comprehend the true meaning of my words), what blindness!—allow me to represent to you the miserable condition——' 'O father (said I, interrupting him hastily), a truce with your morals, if you please: my business on the highway is not to hear sermons; I want money.' 'Money! (cried he, with an air of astonishment) you are little acquainted with the charity of the Spaniards, if you think people of my cloth have occasion for money while they travel in this kingdom. Undeceive yourself; we are everywhere cheerfully received, have lodging and victuals, and nothing is asked in return but our prayers: in short, we never carry money about us on the road; but confide altogether in providence.' 'That won't go down with me (I replied): your dependence is not altogether so visionary; for, you have always some good pistoles in reserve, to make more sure of providence. But, my good father (added I), let us ha' done:—my comrades, who are in that wood, begin to be impatient; therefore throw your purse upon the ground instantly, or I shall certainly put you to death.'

At these words, which I uttered with a menacing look, the friar, seeming afraid of his life, said, 'Hold! I will satisfy you then, since there is a necessity for it: I see tropes and figures have no effect on people

of your profession.' So saying, he pulled from underneath his gown a large purse of chamois leather, which he dropped upon the ground. Then I told him, he might continue his journey; a permission he did not give me the trouble of repeating; but clapped his heels to the sides of his mule, which belying the opinion I had conceived of her (for I imagined she was not much better than my uncle's), all of a sudden went off at a pretty round pace. As soon as he was at a distance I alighted, and taking up the purse, which seemed heavy, mounted again, and got back to the wood in a trice, where the thieves waited with impatience, to congratulate me upon my victory. Scarce would they give me time to dismount, so eager were they to embrace me, 'Courage, Gil Blas! (said Rolando) thou hast done wonders. I have had my eyes on thee during thy expedition: I have observed thy countenance all the time, and I prophesy that thou wilt in time become an excellent highwayman.' The lieutenant and the rest approved of the prediction, which they assured me I should one day certainly fulfil. I thanked them for the high idea they had conceived of me, and promised to do all that lay in my power to maintain it.

After they had loaded me with so much undeserved praise, they were desirous of examining the booty I had made. 'Come (said they), let us see what there is in the clergyman's purse.' 'It ought to be well furnished (continued one among them), for those good fathers don't travel like pilgrims.' The captain untied the purse, and, opening it, pulled out two or three handfuls of copper medals, mixed with bits of hallowed wax[1], and some scapularies[2]. At the sight of such an

[1] *Médailles de cuivre, entremêlées d'Agnus Dei:* an *Agnus Dei* is 'the figure of a lamb stamped on the wax which remains from the Paschal candles, and solemnly blessed by the Pope on the Thursday after Easter, in the first and seventh years of his pontificate.'

[2] A scapular (or scapulary) is described as consisting of 'two little pieces of cloth worn out of devotion over the

uncommon prey, all the robbers burst out into immoderate fits of laughter. 'Upon my soul (cried the lieutenant), we are very much obliged to Gil Blas for having, in his *coup d'essai*, performed a theft so salutary to the company.' This piece of wit brought on more. Those miscreants, and he in particular who had apostatized, began to be very merry upon the matter: a thousand sallies escaped them, that too well denoted their immorality. I was the only person who did not laugh, my mirth being checked by the ralliers, who enjoyed themselves at my expense. Every one having shot his bolt, the captain said to me, 'In faith, Gil Blas, I advise thee as a friend to joke no more with monks, who are, generally speaking, too arch and cunning for such as thee.'

CHAPTER IX

Of the serious affair that followed this adventure

We remained in the wood the greatest part of the day, without perceiving any traveller that could make amends for the priest. At last we left it, in order to return to our cavern, confining our exploits to that ludicrous event which still constituted the subject of our discourse, when we discovered at a distance a coach drawn by four mules, advancing at a brisk trot, and escorted by three men on horseback, who seemed well armed. Upon this Rolando ordered his troop to halt, and held a council; the result of which was, that

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shoulders, under the ordinary garb.' The chief scapulars are the brown, or Carmelite; the white, or Trinitarian; the black, or Servite; and the blue, or Theatine. The brown scapular is said to date from the thirteenth or fourteenth century, and the blue scapular dates from the sixteenth century: the dates of the white and black scapulars seem to be uncertain. However, the friar might apparently have worn any (or all) of these, but not the popular red scapular, which dates no further back than 1846.

they should attack the coach. We were immediately arranged according to his disposition, and marched up to it in order of battle. In spite of the applause I had acquired in the wood, I felt myself seized with a universal tremor, and immediately a cold sweat broke out all over my body, which I looked upon as no very favourable omen. To crown my good luck I was in the front of the line, between the captain and lieutenant, who had stationed me there, that I might accustom myself to stand fire all at once. Rolando, observing how much nature suffered within me, looked at me askance, saying, with a fierce countenance, 'Hark'ee, Gil Blas, remember to do thy duty; for if thou hang'st an arse, I'll blow thy brains out.' I was too well persuaded that he would keep his word, to neglect this caution; for which reason I thought of nothing now but of recommending my soul to God.

In the meantime the coach and horsemen approached, who knowing what sort of people we were, and guessing our design by our appearance, stopped within musket-shot, and prepared to receive us; while a gentleman of a good mien, and richly dressed, came out of the coach, and mounting a horse that was led by one of his attendants, put himself at their head, without any other arms than a sword and pair of pistols. Though they were but four against nine (the coachman remaining on his seat), they advanced towards us with a boldness that redoubled my fear: I did not fail, however, though I trembled in every joint, to make ready to fire; but, to tell the truth, I shut my eyes, and turned away my head, when I discharged my carbine; and, considering the manner in which it went off, my conscience ought to be acquitted on that score.

I will not pretend to describe the action; for although I was present I saw nothing, and my fear, in confounding my imagination, concealed from me the horror of the spectacle that occasioned it. All I know of the matter is, that after a great noise of firing, I heard my companions shout, and cry victory!

victory! At that acclamation the terror, which had taken possession of my senses, dissipated, and I saw the four horsemen stretched lifeless on the field of battle. On our side we had but one man killed, and he was no other than the apostate, who had met with his deserts for his apostacy and profane jests upon the scapularies. The lieutenant received a wound in the arm; but it was a very slight one, the shot having only ruffled the skin.

Señor Rolando ran immediately to the door of the coach, in which there was a lady of about four or five and twenty years of age, who appeared very handsome, notwithstanding the melancholy condition in which she was; for she had swooned during the engagement, and was not yet recovered. While he was busied in looking after her, we took care of the booty, beginning with securing the horses of the killed, which, frightened at the noise of the firing, had run away, after having lost their riders. As for the mules they had not stirred, although the coachman (during the action) had quitted his place, in order to make his escape. We alighted, and, unyoking, loaded them with some trunks we found fastened to the coach before and behind. This being done, the lady, who had not as yet recovered her senses, was (by order of the captain) taken out, and placed on horseback before one of the robbers that was best mounted; after which, quitting the high road, the coach, and the dead, whom we had stripped, we carried off the lady, the mules, and the horses.

CHAPTER X

In what manner the robbers behaved to the lady. Of the great design which Gil Blas projected, and the issue thereof

It was within an hour of daybreak when we arrived at our habitation; and the first thing we did was to lead our beasts into the stable, where we were obliged

to tie them to the rack, and take care of them with our own hands, the old negro having been (three days before) seized with a violent fit of the gout and rheumatism, that kept him a-bed, deprived of the use of all his limbs: the only member at liberty was his tongue, which he employed in testifying his impatience, by the most horrible execrations. Leaving this miserable wretch to swear and blaspheme, we went to the kitchen, where our whole attention was engrossed by the lady, and we succeeded so well as to bring her out of her fit: but when she had recovered the use of her senses, and saw herself in the hands of several men whom she did not know, she perceived her misfortune, and was seized with horror. The most lively sorrow and direful despair appeared in her eyes, which she lifted up to heaven, as if to reproach it with the indignities that threatened her: then giving way of a sudden to these dismal apprehensions, she relapsed into a swoon; her eyelids closed, and the robbers imagined that death would deprive them of their prey. The captain, thinking it more proper to leave her to herself than to torment her with their assistance, ordered her to be carried to Leonarda's bed, where she was left alone, at the hazard of what might happen.

We repaired to the hall, where one of the thieves, who had been bred a surgeon, dressed the lieutenant's wound: after which, being desirous of seeing what was in the trunks, we found some of them filled with lace and linen, others with clothes, and the last we opened contained some bags full of pistoles; at sight of which the gentlemen concerned were infinitely rejoiced. This inquiry being made, the cook-maid furnished the sideboard, laid the cloth, and served up supper. Our conversation at first turned upon the great victory we had obtained; and Rolando addressing himself to me, 'Confess, Gil Blas (said he), confess that thou wast horribly afraid.' I ingenuously owned, that what he said was very true; but that when I should have made two or three campaigns, I would fight like a knight-errant: whereupon the whole

company took my part, observing that my fear was excusable; that the action had been very hot; and that, considering I was a young fellow who had never smelled gunpowder, I had acquitted myself pretty well.

The discourse afterwards falling upon the mules and horses we had brought into our retreat, it was agreed, that to-morrow before day we should all set out together, in order to sell them at Mansilla, which place, in all probability, the report of our expedition had not yet reached. This resolution being taken, we finished our meal, and returned into the kitchen to visit the lady, whom we found still in the same situation. Nevertheless, though it was with difficulty we could perceive any signs of life in her, some of the villains did not scruple to regard her with a profane eye, and even to discover a brutal desire, which they would have satisfied immediately, had not Rolando prevented it, by representing to them, that they ought at least to wait until the lady should get the better of that oppression of sorrow which deprived her of reflection. The respect they had for the captain restrained their incontinence, otherwise nothing could have saved the lady, whose honour death itself, perhaps, would not have been able to secure.

We left this unfortunate gentlewoman in the same condition in which we found her, Rolando contenting himself with laying injunctions on Leonarda to take care of her, while every one retired into his own apartment. For my own part, as soon as I got to bed, instead of resigning myself to sleep, I did nothing but think of that lady's misfortune: I never doubted that she was a person of quality, and looked upon her situation as the more deplorable for that reason. I could not without shuddering represent to myself the horrors to which she was destined, and felt myself as deeply concerned for her as if I had been attached by blood or friendship. At last, after having bewailed her hard fate, I began to revolve the means of rescuing her honour from the danger in which it was, and of deliver-

ing myself at the same time from the subterranean abode. I recollected that the old negro was not in a condition to move, and that, since his being taken ill, the cook-wench kept the key of the grate. This reflection warmed my imagination, and made me conceive a scheme, which I digested so well, that I began to put it in practice immediately, in the following manner.

Pretending to be racked with the cholic, I began with complaints and groans; then raising my voice, uttered dreadful cries, that wakened the robbers, and brought them instantly to my bedside. When they asked what made me roar so hideously, I answered, that I was tortured with a horrible cholic; and, the better to persuade them of the truth of what I said, grinded my teeth, made frightful grimaces and contortions, and writhed myself in a strange manner: then I became quiet all of a sudden, as if my pains had given me some respite. In a moment after, I began again to bounce upon the bed, and twist about my limbs: in a word, I played my part so well, that the thieves, cunning as they were, allowed themselves to be deceived, and believed, in good earnest, that I was violently griped. In a moment all of them were busied in endeavours to ease me: one brought a bottle of usquebaugh, and made me swallow one half of it: another, in spite of my teeth, injected a clyster of oil of sweet almonds; a third warmed a napkin, and applied it broiling hot to my belly. I roared for mercy in vain: they imputed my cries to the cholic, and continued to make me suffer real pains, in attempting to free me from one I did not feel. At last, being able to resist them no longer, I was fain to tell them that the gripes had left me, and to conjure them to give me quarter. Upon which they left off tormenting me with their remedies, and I took care to trouble them no more with my complaints, for fear of undergoing their good offices a second time.

This scene lasted almost three hours; after which the robbers, judging that day was not far off, prepared

themselves to set out for Mansilla. I would have got up, to make them believe I was very desirous of accompanying them; but they would not suffer me to rise, Señor Rolando saying, 'No, no, Gil Blas, stay at home, child; thy cholic may return. Thou shalt go with us another time; but thou art in no condition to go abroad to-day.' I was afraid of insisting upon it too much, lest he should yield to my request; therefore I only appeared very much mortified, because I could not be of the party. This I acted so naturally, that they went out of the cavern without the least suspicion of my design. After their departure, which I had endeavoured to hasten by my prayers, I said to myself, 'Now, Gil Blas! now is the time for thee to have resolution: arm thyself with courage, to finish that which thou hast so happily begun. Domingo is not in a condition to oppose thy enterprise, and Leonarda cannot hinder its execution. Seize this opportunity of escaping, than which, perhaps, thou wilt never find one more favourable.' These suggestions filled me with confidence; I got up, took my sword and pistols, and went first towards the kitchen; but before I entered, hearing Leonarda speaking, stopped, in order to listen. She was talking to the unknown lady, who, having recovered her senses, and understood the whole of her misfortune, wept, in the utmost bitterness of despair. 'Weep, my child (said the old beldam to her), dissolve yourself into tears, and don't spare sighs; for that will give you ease. You have had a dangerous qualm: but now, there is nothing to fear, since you shed abundance of tears. Your grief will abate by little and little, and you will soon accustom yourself to live with our gentlemen, who are men of honour. You will be treated like a princess, meet with nothing but complaisance, and fresh proofs of affection every day. There are a great many women who would be glad to be in your place.'

I did not give Leonarda time to proceed, but entering, clapped a pistol to her breast, and, with a threatening look, commanded her to surrender the key of the

grate. She was confounded at my behaviour, and, though almost at the end of her career, so much attached to life, that she durst not refuse my demand. Having got the key in my possession, I addressed myself to the afflicted lady, saying, 'Madam, heaven has sent you a deliverer; rise and follow me, and I will conduct you whithersoever you shall please to direct.' The lady did not remain deaf to my words, which made such an impression upon her, that summoning up all the strength she had left, she got up, and throwing herself at my feet, conjured me to preserve her honour. I raised and assured her, that she might rely upon me; then taking some cords, which I perceived in the kitchen, with her assistance, I tied Leonarda to the feet of a large table, swearing that if she opened her mouth, I would kill her on the spot. I afterwards lighted a flambeau, and going with the stranger into the room where the gold and silver was deposited, filled my pockets with pistoles and double pistoles; and to induce the lady to follow my example, assured her, that she only took back her own. When we had made a good provision of this kind, we went towards the stable, which I entered alone with my pistols cocked, firmly believing that the old negro, in spite of his gout and rheumatism, would not suffer me to saddle and bridle my horse in quiet; and fully resolved to cure him of all his distempers, if he should take it in his head to be troublesome: but, by good luck, he was so overwhelmed with the pains he had undergone, and those he still suffered, that I brought my horse out of the stable, even without his seeming to perceive it; and the lady waiting for me at the door, we threaded, with all dispatch, the passage that led out of the cavern, arrived at the grate, which we opened, and at last came to the trap-door, which we lifted up with great difficulty, or rather the desire of escaping lent us new strength, without which we should not have been able to succeed.

Day began to appear just as we found ourselves delivered from the jaws of this abyss; and as we fer-

vently desired to be at a greater distance from it, I threw myself into the saddle, the lady mounting behind me, and following the first path that presented itself, at a round gallop, got out of the forest in a short time, and entered a plain, divided by several roads, one of which we took at random. I was mortally afraid that it would conduct us to Mansilla, where we might meet with Rolando and his confederates; but happily my fear was vain. We arrived at the town of Astorga, at two o'clock in the afternoon, where people gazed at us with extreme attention, as if it had been an extraordinary thing to see a woman on horseback, sitting behind a man. We alighted at the first inn we came to, where the first thing I did, was to order a partridge and a young rabbit to the fire; and while this was a-doing, I conducted the lady into a chamber, where we began to converse with one another; for we had rode so fast, that we had no discourse upon the road. She showed how sensible she was of the service I had done her, and observed, that after I had performed such a generous action, she could not persuade herself that I was a companion of the thieves, from whom I had rescued her. I told her my story, in order to confirm the good opinion she had conceived of me; and, by that means, engaged her to honour me with her confidence, and inform me of her misfortunes, which she recounted, as I shall relate in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XI

The history of Doña Mencia of Mosquera

I WAS born at Valladolid, and my name is Doña Mencia de Mosquera. Don Martin, my father, after having spent almost his whole patrimony in the service of his king, was killed in Portugal, at the head of his own regiment, and left me so moderately provided, that though I was an only child, I was far from being

a good match. I did not want admirers, however, in spite of the lowness of my fortune: a good many of the most considerable cavaliers in Spain made their addresses to me; but he who attracted my attention most, was Don Álvaro de Mello: he was indeed more handsome than any of his rivals; but more substantial qualifications determined me in his favour. He was endued with wit, prudence, probity and valour, and withal the most gallant man in the world: when he gave entertainments, nothing could be more elegant, and when he appeared at tournaments, everybody admired his vigour and address: I preferred him therefore to all others, and married him accordingly.

A few days after our marriage, he happened to meet with Don Andrés de Baeza, who had been one of his rivals, in a private place, where quarrelling with each other, they came to blows, and Don Andrés lost his life in the rencounter. As he was nephew to the corregidor of Valladolid, a violent man, and mortal enemy to the family of Mello, Don Álvaro knew he could not leave the city too soon: he returned home in a hurry, and, while they saddled his horse, told me what had happened. 'My dear Mencia (said he), we must part! you know the corregidor: don't let us then flatter ourselves, for he will prosecute me with the utmost rancour; and as you are not ignorant of his credit, you know I cannot be safe in this kingdom.' He was so much penetrated with his own sorrow, and with that which he saw take possession of my breast, that he could say no more; and when I had prevailed upon him to furnish himself with some money and jewels, he clasped me in his arms, and, during a whole quarter of an hour, we did nothing but mingle our sighs and tears. At last, being told the horse was ready, he tore himself from me; he departed, and left me in a condition not to be described. Happy! had the excess of my affliction, at that time, put an end to my life! what troubles and sorrows would my death have prevented! Some hours after Don Álvaro was gone, the corregidor being informed of his flight,

ordered him to be pursued, and spared nothing to have him in his power: but my husband always baffled his pursuit, and kept himself secure, in such a manner, that the judge found himself obliged to limit his revenge to the sole satisfaction of ruining the fortune of a man, whose blood he wanted to shed: his efforts were not unsuccessful, all the effects of Don Álvaro being confiscated.

Left in a most afflicting situation, and having scarce wherewithal to subsist, I began to live a very solitary life, all my attendants being reduced to one maid. I spent the day in bemoaning, not an indigence, which I could have bore with patience; but the absence of my dear husband, whose condition I was utterly ignorant of, although he had promised, in his last melancholy adieu, that he would take care to inform me of his lot, into whatever part of the world his cruel fate should conduct him. Nevertheless, seven long years elapsed, without my hearing the least account of him; and this uncertainty of his destiny, plunged me into an abyss of sorrow! At last I was told, that, in fighting for the king of Portugal in Fez, he had lost his life in battle[1]: a man lately returned from Africa confirmed this report, assuring me, that he was perfectly well acquainted with Don Álvaro de Mello, had served with him in the Portuguese army, and even seen him fall in the action: to this he added many other circumstances, which persuaded me, that my husband was no more.

At that time, Don Ambrosio Mesia Carrillo, Marquis de Guardia, came to Valladolid. He was one of those old lords who, by the politeness and gallantry of their manners, make people forget their age, and continue still agreeable to the ladies. One day hearing, by

[1] Sebastian I of Portugal was defeated and killed at Al-Kasr al-Kebir in August, 1578. Doña Mencia must therefore have married the Marquis de Guardia in 1585, and her meeting with Gil Blas took place not long afterwards. This is inconsistent with the chronology of Book XII, Chapter xiv.

accident, the story of Don Álvaro; and being desirous of seeing me, on account of the picture which had been drawn of me; for the satisfaction of his curiosity, he engaged one of my relations, who carried me to her house. Seeing me there, I had the fortune to please him, in spite of the remarkable impression which grief had made on my countenance: but why do I say in spite of it? perhaps he was touched alone by my sad and languishing air, which prepossessed him in favour of my fidelity: his love, in all probability, was the effect of my melancholy; for he told me more than once, that he looked upon me as a miracle of constancy; and that, for this reason, he even envied the fate of my husband, how deplorable soever it was in other respects: in a word, he was struck at sight of me, and had no occasion to see me a second time, in order to take the resolution of making me his wife.

He chose the intercession of my kinswoman, towards the obtaining of my consent: she came to my lodgings accordingly, and represented to me, that my husband having ended his days in the kingdom of Fez, as we had been informed, it was not reasonable that I should bury my charms any longer; that I had sufficiently bewailed the fate of a man with whom I had been united but a few moments; and that I ought to profit by the occasion that now presented itself; by which means, I should be the happiest woman in the world. Then she extolled the great family of the old marquis, his vast estate, and unblemished character: but her eloquence in displaying the advantages he possessed was in vain: it was not in her power to persuade me; not that I doubted the death of Don Álvaro, or was restrained by the fear of seeing him again, when I should least expect him; the little inclination, or rather the reluctance, I felt for a second marriage, after having suffered so many misfortunes by my first, was the only obstacle my relation had to remove. She did not despair for all that; on the contrary, it redoubled her zeal for Don Ambrosio; she engaged my whole family in the interests of that lord; my

relations pressed me to accept of such an advantageous match; I was every moment besieged, importuned, and tormented; and my misery, which daily increased, contributed not a little to overcome my resistance.

Being unable, therefore, to hold out any longer, I yielded to their pressing instances, and married the Marquis de Guardia, who, the day after our nuptials, carried me to a very fine castle which he had, situated near Burgos, between Grajal and Rodillas. He conceived the most violent passion for me, and I observed in the whole of his behaviour the utmost desire of pleasing me. His only study was to anticipate my wishes: no husband had ever such a tender regard for his wife; and no lover ever showed more complaisance to his mistress. I should have been passionately fond of Don Ambrosio, notwithstanding the disproportion of our years, had I been capable of loving anyone after Don Álvaro; but a constant heart can never change. The endeavours of my second husband to please me were rendered ineffectual by the remembrance of my first; so that I could only requite his tenderness with pure sentiments of gratitude.

I was in this disposition, when, one day, taking the air at a window of my apartment, I perceived, in the garden, a kind of peasant, who earnestly looked at me: thinking he was the gardener's servant, I took no notice of him; but next day, being again at the window, I saw him in the same place, and he seemed to view me with uncommon attention; struck with this circumstance, I looked at him, in my turn, and after having some time considered him, thought I recalled the features of the unfortunate Don Álvaro! This apparition raised an inconceivable tumult within me! I shrieked aloud; but, luckily, there was nobody present, except Inés, who, of all my servants, enjoyed the greatest share of my confidence. When I imparted to her the suspicion that alarmed me, she laughed at my apprehension, believing that my eyes were imposed upon by some slight resemblance. 'Recollect

yourself, madam (said she), and don't imagine you have seen your former husband: what likelihood is there, that he should be here in the dress of a peasant? or, indeed, what probability is there of his being alive? I will go down into the garden (added she), and talk to this countryman, and when I have learned who he is, come back and let you know.' Inés accordingly went into the garden, and soon after returned to my apartment in great emotion, saying, 'Madam, your suspicion is but too just! it is Don Álvaro himself whom you have seen! he has discovered himself, and demands a secret interview.'

As I had, at that very time, an opportunity of receiving Don Álvaro, the marquis being at Burgos, I ordered my maid to bring him into my closet, by a private staircase. You may well think I was in a terrible agitation, and altogether unable to support the presence of a man, who had a right to load me with reproaches. As soon as he appeared, I fainted away. Inés and he flew to my assistance, and when they had brought me out of my swoon, Don Álvaro said, 'Madam, for heaven's sake compose yourself; let not my presence be a punishment to you; I have no intention to give you the least pain; I come not as a furious husband, to call you to an account of your plighted troth, and upbraid you with the second engagement you have contracted: I know very well, that it was the work of your relations; I am acquainted with all the persecutions you have suffered on that score: besides, the report of my death was spread all over Valladolid; and you had the more reason to believe it true, as no letter from me assured you of the contrary: in short, I know in what manner you have lived since our cruel separation, and that necessity rather than love, has thrown you into the arms of—' 'Ah, sir! (cried I, interrupting him) why will you excuse your unhappy wife? she is criminal, since you live! why am I not still in that miserable situation in which I lived, before I gave my hand to Don Ambrosio! fatal nuptials! I should then, at least, have

had the consolation, in my misery, to see you again without a blush.'

'My dear Mencia! (replied Don Álvaro, with a look that testified how much he was affected by my tears) I do not complain; and far from reproaching you with the splendid condition in which I find you, by all my hopes I thank heaven for it: since the melancholy day of my departure from Valladolid, fate has been always adverse, and my life but a chain of misfortunes; and, to crown my misery, it never was in my power to let you hear from me! Too confident of your love, I incessantly represented to myself the condition to which my fatal tenderness had reduced you. My imagination painted Doña Mencia in her tears! you was the greatest of all my misfortunes, and sometimes, I must confess, I have looked upon myself as criminal, in having had the good fortune to please you: I have wished that your affections had inclined towards some one of my rivals, since the preference you gave to me had cost you so dear. Nevertheless, after seven years of suffering, more in love than ever, I was resolved to see you. I could not resist this desire, which, at the end of a long slavery, having an opportunity to satisfy, I went, in this disguise, to Valladolid, at the hazard of my life; there being informed of everything, I came hither, and found means to introduce myself into the family of the gardener, who has hired me to work under him. You see in what manner I have conducted myself to obtain this private interview; but do not imagine that my design is to trouble the felicity you enjoy, by remaining in this place. No! I love you more than myself; I have the utmost regard for your repose; and now that I have had the melancholy satisfaction of conversing with you, will go and finish, at a distance, that miserable life, which I sacrifice to your quiet.'

'No, Don Álvaro! no! (cried I, at these words) I will not suffer you to leave me a second time! I will go along with you, and death alone shall divide

us!' 'Take my advice (said he), and live with Don Ambrosio; do not associate yourself with my misfortunes, but leave me alone to support the weight of them.' He said other things to the same purpose; but the more he seemed willing to sacrifice himself to my happiness, I felt myself the less disposed to consent to it: and when he saw me firmly resolved to follow him, he changed his tone all of a sudden, and assuming a more serene air, said, 'Madam, since you have still so much love for Don Álvaro, as to prefer his misery to the prosperity you now enjoy, let us go and live at Betancos, at the farther end of the kingdom of Galicia, where I have a secure retreat. Although my misfortunes have ruined my estate, they have not yet deprived me of my friends: I have still some faithful ones remaining, who have put me in a condition to carry you off: by their assistance, I have provided a coach at Zamora, bought mules and horses, and am accompanied by three resolute Galicians, armed with carbines and pistols, who now wait for my orders at the village of Rodillas. Let us therefore (added he) take the advantage of Don Ambrosio's absence: I will order the coach to come to the castle-gate, and we will set out instantly.' I consented, Don Álvaro flew to Rodillas, and returned in a short time, with his three attendants, to carry me off from the midst of my women, who, not knowing what to think of this event, ran all away, in the utmost consternation. Inés alone was privy to it, but refused to attach her fortune to mine, because she was in love with the valet de chambre of Don Ambrosio.

I got into the coach with Don Álvaro, carrying nothing with me, but my own clothes, and some jewels I had before my second marriage; for I would take nothing that the marquis had given me, on that occasion. We took the road to Galicia, without knowing if we should be so happy as to reach it, having reason to fear that Don Ambrosio, at his return, would pursue us with a great number of people, and overtake us. Nevertheless, we continued our

journey two days, without seeing one horseman behind us; and in hopes that the third would pass in the same manner, were conversing with each other in great tranquillity; Don Álvaro had just recounted the melancholy adventure, which had given rise to the report of his death, and how, after having been a slave five years, he had recovered his liberty; when yesterday, on the road to Leon, we met those thieves, with whom you was in company. He is the person whom they murdered, with all his attendants, and for whom these my tears are shed.

CHAPTER XII

The disagreeable manner in which Gil Blas and the lady were interrupted

Doña Mencia having ended her relation, shed a torrent of tears, while I, letting her give free vent to her sighs, wept also; so natural is it to interest oneself for the unfortunate, especially for a fine lady in distress. I was going to ask what she intended to do in the present conjuncture; and perhaps she was about to consult me on the same subject; when our conversation was interrupted by a great noise in the inn, which, in spite of us, attracted our attention. This noise was occasioned by the arrival of the corregidor followed by two alguazils and a guard, who without any ceremony entered the room where we were. A gentleman who accompanied them, approached me first, and examining my dress, had no occasion to hesitate long, but cried, 'By Santiago! this is my individual doublet, as easy to be known again as my horse: you may apprehend this gallant on my testimony; he is one of the thieves who have an unknown retreat somewhere in this country.'

At this discourse, by which I understood he was the gentleman who had been robbed, and whose spoils I was unluckily in possession of, I was surprised,

confounded, and dismayed. The corregidor, whose office obliged him to put a bad construction on my disorder, rather than interpret it favourably, concluded that I was not accused without reason, and presuming that the lady might be an accomplice, ordered us to be imprisoned separately. This judge, far from being one of those who assume a stern countenance, was all softness and smiles; but God knows if he was a bit the better for that; for I was no sooner committed, than he came into the jail with his two terriers, I mean, the alguazils, who (not forgetting their laudable custom) began to rummage me in a moment. What a glorious windfall was this, for those honest gentlemen! I do not believe that ever they got such a booty before: at every handful of pistoles they pulled out, I saw their eyes sparkle with joy; the corregidor in particular, was transported! 'Child (said he, in a voice full of meekness), we must do our duty, but be not afraid: if thou art innocent, thou shalt sustain no harm.' In the meantime, with all their gentleness, they emptied my pockets, and even robbed me of that which the thieves had respected, I mean my uncle's forty ducats: their greedy and indefatigable hands searched me from head to foot, they turned me about on all sides, and even stripped me to see if I had any money between my shirt and my skin. When they had dexterously acquitted themselves in this manner, I was interrogated by the corregidor, to whom I ingenuously recounted everything that had happened to me. He ordered my deposition to be taken in writing, and then went away with his attendants and my coin, leaving me entirely naked among straw.

'O life! (cried I, when I found myself alone in this condition) how full of capricious accidents and disappointments art thou! Since I left Oviedo, I have met with nothing but misfortunes! Scarce had I got out of one danger, when I fell into another! and when I came into this town, I was far from thinking that I should so soon become acquainted with the corregidor.'

While I made these vain reflections, I put on again the cursed doublet and the rest of the dress which my evil genius had lent me; then exhorting myself to take courage, 'Come, Gil Blas (said I to myself), show thy fortitude: it shall ill become thee to despair in an ordinary prison, after having put thy patience to such a severe trial in the subterranean abyss! But alas! (added I, in a sorrowful tone) I abuse myself; how shall I escape from hence, when I am utterly deprived of the means?' In effect, I had too good reason to say so; for a prisoner without money, is like a bird whose wings are clipped.

Instead of the partridge and rabbit I had bespoke, they brought to me a little brown bread and a pitcher of water, and left me to fret at leisure in a dungeon, where I remained fifteen whole days, without seeing a human creature, except the turnkey, who came every morning to renew my provision. As often as I saw him, I endeavoured to speak and enter into conversation with him, in order to divert me a little: but this venerable person made no answer to what I said; I could not extract one word from him: nay, for the most part, he came in and went out, without so much as deigning me a look. On the sixteenth day, the corregidor coming in, said, 'Thou mayst now give a loose to joy. I bring thee agreeable tidings. I have ordered the lady who was along with thee, to be conducted to Burgos. I examined her before her departure, and her answers have exculpated thee. Thou shalt be enlarged this very day, provided that the muleteer, with whom (as thou sayest) thou camest from Peñaflor to Cacabelos, confirms thy deposition. He is now in Astorga, and I have sent for him; and if he agrees with thee, in the adventure of the rack, I will instantly set thee free.'

These words gave me infinite joy. I looked upon myself as already acquitted; I thanked the judge for his just and expeditious decision, and had not quite finished my compliment, when the carrier, conducted by two soldiers, arrived: I remembered his face im-

mediately; but he, having without doubt sold my portmanteau, and all that was in it, was afraid of being obliged to restore the money he had received for it, if he should own that he knew me; and therefore affirmed with astonishing assurance, that far from knowing me, he had never seen me before. 'Ah, traitor (cried I), rather confess that thou hast sold my goods; and bear witness to the truth: look at me again. I am one of the young people whom you threatened with the torture, at the borough of Cacabelos, and frightened very much.' The carrier answered, coldly, that I talked of an affair of which he was utterly ignorant; and as he maintained to the last, that I was unknown to him, my enlargement was deferred till another time: so that I was obliged to arm myself with patience anew, and resolve to regale myself still with my bread and water, and a sight of the silent turnkey. The thoughts of being unable to free myself from the claws of justice, although I was not guilty of the least crime, threw me into despair! I wished myself again in the cavern, 'where in the main (said I to myself) I was less disagreeably situated than in this dungeon: there I ate and drank in plenty, conversed with the robbers, and lived in the sweet hope of making my escape; instead of which, notwithstanding my innocence, I shall perhaps think myself happily quit, to get out of this place, in order to be sent to the galleys.'

CHAPTER XIII

By what accident Gil Blas was set at liberty at last; and whither he directed his course

While I passed my days in entertaining myself with these reflections, my adventures, such as they appeared in my deposition, spread all over the town; upon which many people, being curious to see me, came and presented themselves, one after another, at a small

chink through which the light was conveyed into my prison, and, after having observed me for some time, went away. I was surprised at this novelty; for since the day of my imprisonment, I had not before seen a living soul at that window, which served to enlighten a court where horror reigned in silence. Guessing from this, that I made some noise in town, I did not know whether to interpret it as a good or bad omen.

One of the first that offered themselves to my view was the little ballad-singer of Mondoñedo, who, having been equally afraid of the torture, had fled as well as I. I knew him again immediately, and, as he did not pretend to have forgot me, we saluted one another; and falling into a long conversation, I was obliged to repeat my adventures anew: for his part, he informed me of what had happened in the inn at Cacabelos, between the carrier and the new-married wife, after we had been driven away by a panic: in a word, he acquainted me with the whole of what I have already rehearsed on that subject. Afterwards, taking leave of me for the present, he promised, without loss of time, to labour for my deliverance; and everybody who came (as he did) through curiosity, seemed affected with my misfortune, and even assured me, that they would join the little ballad-singer, and do all that lay in their power to procure my enlargement.

They kept their promise effectually, and spoke in my behalf to the corregidor, who no longer doubting my innocence, especially when the ballad-singer had told him what he knew of the matter, at the end of three weeks came into the prison, and said, 'Gil Blas, I don't choose to protract things: go, thou art free, and mayst quit the prison when thou wilt. But tell me (pursued he), if thou shouldst be brought to the wood in which the subterranean retreat is, couldst thou not find it out?' 'No, sir (I replied); for as I went in at night, and came out before day, it would be impossible for me to fix upon the spot.' Upon this the judge withdrew, telling me, that he was going to order the turnkey to set the prison-doors open for me.

In effect, the gaoler came into my dungeon a moment after, with one of his men carrying a bundle of clothes; and stripping me (with a grave and silent air) of my doublet and breeches, which were made of fine cloth, and almost new, they put on me a shabby footman's frock, and pushed me out by the shoulders.

The joy that prisoners commonly feel in recovering their liberty, was moderated by my confusion in seeing myself so poorly equipped; and I was tempted to leave the town instantly, that I might withdraw myself from the eyes of the people, whose looks I could scarce endure: but my gratitude got the better of my shame: I went to thank the ballad-singer, to whom I was so much obliged; and he could not help laughing when he saw me. 'What a strange figure you are! (said he). Justice I see has been done you in all her forms.' 'I do not complain of justice (I replied): she is most equitable: I wish only that all her officers were honest men. They ought at least to have spared my clothes, which I think I paid for pretty handsomely.' 'I think so too (said he); but they will tell you, these are formalities which must be observed. What! do you think (for example) that your horse has been restored to the right owner? Not at all; I assure you he is now actually in the stable of the town-clerk, where he has been deposited as a proof of the robbery; and I don't believe the poor gentleman will ever retrieve so much as the crupper. But let us shift our discourse (continued he): what is your design? what scheme do you intend to prosecute at present?' I want to go to Burgos (said I), in order to find out the lady I delivered, who will give me a few pistoles, with which I will purchase a new cassock, and repair to Salamanca, where I will endeavour to make my Latin turn to some advantage. All I am concerned at is, that I am at some distance from Burgos, and shall want subsistence on the road.' 'I understand you (he replied): here is my purse: 'tis, indeed, a little low; but a ballad-singer, you know, is not a bishop.' At the same time he slipped it into my hand so cheer-

fully, that I could not for my soul refuse the offer, such as it was. I thanked him as much as if he had given me all the gold in Peru, and made a thousand professions of service, which I never had an opportunity to perform. Then, bidding him farewell, I left the town, without having visited those other persons who had contributed to my enlargement; contenting myself with bestowing upon them, in my own thoughts, a thousand benedictions.

The little ballad-singer was in the right to speak modestly of his purse, in which I found very little money: but, happily for me, I had been used two months to a very frugal diet; and I had still some reals left, when I arrived at the borough of Ponte de Mula, which is but a little way from Burgos. Here I halted to enquire about Doña Mencia, and going into an inn, the mistress of which was a little, lean, fierce, insolent creature, I perceived at once, by the disdainful look she darted at me, that my frock was not at all to her liking; a disgust which I forgave with all my heart. I sat down at table, where I ate some bread and cheese, and swallowed a few draughts of execrable wine, which they brought for me; and during this repast, which was very well suited to my dress, I wanted to enter into conversation with my landlady. I begged her to tell me if she knew the Marquis de Guardia; if his castle was far from the borough; and, in particular, if she had heard what was become of the marchioness his lady. 'You ask a great many questions' (replied she, with a scornful look): she told me however (though with a very bad grace), that the castle of Don Ambrosio was but a short league from Ponte de Mula.

When I had done eating and drinking (it being by this time pretty late), I expressed a desire of going to rest, and bade them show me into a bedchamber. 'A bedchamber for you! (said the landlady, darting at me a look full of haughtiness and contempt) I have no bedchambers for people who sup on a morsel of cheese. All my beds are bespoke: I expect gentlemen

of importance to lodge here to-night; so that all I can do for you is to quarter you in the barn; and it won't (I suppose) be the first time you have slept upon straw.' She did not know how true she spoke; but I made no reply, and very wisely condescended to sneak into the straw, where in a very short time I slept like one who had suffered much fatigue.

CHAPTER XIV

Of his reception at Burgos by Doña Mencia

I DID not lie a-bed like a sluggard next morning, but went to reckon with my landlady, who seemed less proud and snappish than she had been the night before: a change that I ascribed to the presence of three honest soldiers belonging to the Holy Brotherhood, who conversed with her in a very familiar manner. They had lodged all night at the inn, and it was, doubtless, for these gentlemen of importance, that all the beds had been bespoke.

Inquiring in the borough the way to the castle whither I wanted to go, I addressed myself by accident to a man of the character of my landlord at Peñaflor: not contented with answering the question I asked, he let me know that Don Ambrosio was dead three weeks ago, and that the marchioness his lady had retired into a convent at Burgos, which he named. I repaired immediately to that city, instead of following the road to the castle, as I formerly intended, and flying directly to the convent where she was, begged the favour of the portress to tell her that a young man, just released from the jail of Astorga, desired to speak with her. The nun went immediately to do what I desired, and returning, introduced me into a parlour, where I had not been long when I saw the widow of Don Ambrosio appear at the grate in deep mourning.

'You are welcome (said the lady to me): four days

ago I wrote to a person at Astorga, desiring him to go to you from me, and tell you that I should be glad to see you, as soon as you should be released; and I did not doubt of your being enlarged in a very little time, what I said to the corregidor in your behalf having been sufficient for that purpose. In answer to this he wrote, that you had recovered your liberty, but nobody knew whither you was gone; so that I was afraid I should never see you again, and consequently be deprived of the pleasure of manifesting my gratitude. Don't be ashamed (added she, observing my confusion on account of appearing before her in such a miserable dress), let not your present condition give you the least uneasiness. After the important service you have done me, I should be the most ungrateful of all women, if I neglected to do something for you: I intend to extricate you out of the wretched situation in which you are: it is my duty, and I am able to perform it. The considerable wealth I am now mistress of, empowering me to acquit myself towards you, without incommoding myself.'

'You know (continued she) my adventures to the day on which we were both imprisoned; and I will tell you what has happened to me since. When the corregidor of Astorga had ordered me to be conducted to Burgos, after having heard from my mouth a faithful relation of my story, I repaired to Don Ambrosio's castle, where my return occasioned extreme surprise, though I was told it was too late; for the marquis, thunderstruck at the news of my flight, had fallen ill, and the physicians despaired of his life. This was fresh cause for me to complain of the rigour of my fate: nevertheless, having advertised him of my arrival, I entered his chamber, and, running to his bedside, threw myself on my knees, my face bathed in tears, and my heart oppressed with the most afflicting grief! "What brings you hither?" (said he, when he perceived me). Are you come to contemplate your own work? Was it not sufficient for you to deprive me of life, but you must also have the satisfaction of

being an eyewitness of my death ?" "No, my lord (I replied), Inés must have told you, that I fled with my husband; and had it not been for the dismal accident which has robbed me of him, you never should have seen me again !" At the same time I let him know, that Don Alvaro had been murdered by robbers, who afterwards carried me into their subterranean retreat; and, in short, informed him of all that had happened. When I had done speaking, Don Ambrosio stretched out his hand to me, saying, with the utmost tenderness, "I am satisfied—I cease to complain: why should I reproach you ? having found again a husband whom you dearly loved, you abandoned me to follow his fortune: ought I to blame you for such conduct ? No, madam, I should have been in the wrong to murmur at it, therefore would not suffer you to be pursued: I revered the sacred rights of your ravisher, and even your inclination towards him. In fine, I do you justice; and, by your return, you have retrieved all my tenderness ! Yes, my dear Mencia, your presence overwhelms me with joy ! but alas ! it will not last long. I feel my last hour approaching ! Scarce are you restored to my arms, when I must bid you an eternal adieu !' At these affecting words, my tears redoubled ! I felt and expressed an immoderate affliction ! I question if the death of Don Álvaro, whom I adored, had cost me more sighs ! Don Ambrosio's presage of his own death, was but too true: he expired next day; and I remained mistress of a considerable estate which he had settled upon me, at our marriage. I intend to make no bad use of it. The world shall not see me (though I am still young) throw myself into the arms of a third husband: for besides that, I think such conduct would be inconsistent with the virtue and delicacy of my sex, I own, I have no longer any relish for the world; but design to end my days in this convent, and become a benefactress to it.'

Such was the discourse of Doña Mencia, who taking out a purse from under her robe, put it in my hand,

saying, 'Here are a hundred ducats, which I give you only to buy clothes: come and see me again, after you have equipped yourself; for I do not intend to confine my gratitude within such narrow bounds.' I gave the lady a thousand thanks; and swore I would not depart from Burgos, without taking leave of her: after this oath, which I had no intention to break, I went in quest of an inn, and going into the first I perceived, demanded a room, telling the landlord (to prevent the bad opinion he might conceive of me, from my shabby frock) that notwithstanding my appearance, I was in a condition to pay handsomely for my lodging. At these words, the inn-keeper, whose name was Majuelo[1], naturally a great wag, surveying me from top to bottom, answered dryly, with a sarcastic sneer, there was no occasion for such an assurance, to persuade him, that I should spend like a prince in his house: for he discovered something noble in me, by my dress; and in short, did not doubt that I was a gentleman of a very independent fortune. I could easily perceive that the rascal rallied me, and in order to put an end to his witticisms, showed my purse. I even counted my ducats on a table before him, and observing that my coin altered his opinion very much in my favour, desired he would recommend me to a tailor. 'You had better (said he) send for a broker, who will bring along with him all kinds of apparel ready made, and fit you in a trice.' I approved of his advice, and resolved to follow it: but the day being near a close, deferred my purchase till next morning, and thought of nothing but making a good supper, to indemnify me for the sorry meals I had made since my deliverance from the cavern.

[1] *Majuelo*=a small vineyard, or a braggart.

CHAPTER XV

Of the manner in which Gil Blas dressed himself. Of the new present he received from the lady, and the equipage in which he departed from Burgos

THEY brought for my supper a huge fricassee of sheep-trotters, which I picked to the bones; and having drank in proportion, betook myself to rest. As I had the convenience of a good bed, I was in hopes of enjoying a sound sleep: but for all that, could not close my eyes; my thoughts being engrossed in determining upon the dress I was to choose. 'What must I do? (said I to myself) prosecute my first design, buy a cassock, and go to Salamanca in quest of a tutor's place? But why should I take the habit of a licentiate? Am I ambitious of consecrating myself to the church, or have I the least bias that way? No. I feel myself (on the contrary) quite otherwise inclined: I will turn gentleman, and endeavour to make my fortune in the world.'

Having resolved upon this, I longed for day with the utmost impatience; and no sooner perceived the glimpse of light, than I got up, and made so much noise in the inn, that I wakened all those who were asleep. I called the waiters, who were still a-bed, and who loaded me with curses by way of answer. They were obliged to rise, however, and I gave them no quarter, until one of them had gone for a broker, who soon appeared, followed by two apprentices, carrying each a great green bag on his shoulders. He saluted me with great civility, saying, 'Señor Cavalier, you are very happy in having applied to me, rather than to any other body. I don't choose to disparage my brethren. God forbid that I should prejudice their reputation in the least! but between you and me, there's no conscience among them. They are all as abandoned as Jews. I am the only honest broker in town. I confine myself to a moderate profit; being

satisfied with a pound in the shilling—I mean, a shilling in the pound. Thank heaven ! I deal upon the square with all mankind.'

The broker, after this preamble, which I took for gospel, ordered his men to untie the bundles, and showed me suits of all colours. Some which were of plain cloth I rejected with disdain, as being too mean ; but they made me try one which seemed to have been made exactly for my shape, and which struck my fancy, although somewhat worn. It consisted of a doublet with slashed sleeves, a pair of breeches and a cloak, the whole of blue velvet embroidered with gold. Fixing on this, I cheapened it, and the broker perceiving I was bent upon it, observed that I had an excellent taste. 'Odds bodikins ! (cried he), one may see you know what you are about. I can tell you, that suit was made for one of the greatest lords in the kingdom, who never had it three times on his back. Examine the velvet, nothing can be finer ; and as for the embroidery, you must confess the work is exquisite.' 'What will you sell it for ?' (said I ;) he answered, 'Sixty ducats : I am a rogue if I have not refused the money.' The alternative was plain. I offered five and forty, which might be about double the value. 'Mr. What-d'ye-call-'um (replied the broker with an air of indifference), I never exact too much. I am always at a word. Here (continued he, showing me some of those I had refused) buy this. I'll sell it cheaper.' This was only to excite my desire of purchasing that which I had cheapened ; and accordingly, imagining that he would not abate one farthing of his price, I counted into his hand the sixty ducats. When he saw me part with them so easily, I believe, in spite of his boasted honesty, he wished that he had asked a great deal more : pretty well satisfied, however, with having gained nineteen shillings in the pound, he went away, with his apprentices, whom I had not forgotten.

Having now a very handsome cloak, doublet, and breeches, I spent the rest of the morning in providing

other necessaries. I bought a hat, silk stockings, shoes, linen, and a sword: after which, having dressed, what infinite pleasure had I in beholding myself so well equipped! My eyes (to use the expression) could not sufficiently glut themselves with my attire! Never peacock contemplated his own feathers with more satisfaction. That very day I made my second visit to Doña Mencia, who still received me very kindly, and thanked me again for the service I had done her. On that score, many compliments passed on both sides: after which, wishing me all happiness, she bade me farewell, and retired without giving me anything but a ring worth thirty pistoles, which she desired me to keep in remembrance of her.

I looked very blank with my ring, having laid my account with receiving a much more considerable present, and trudged back to my lodgings in a brown study, little satisfied with the lady's generosity. But just as I entered the inn, a man who had followed me all the way, came in likewise, and laying aside the cloak in which he was muffled up, discovered a great bag under his arm. At the apparition of this bag, which had all the air of being full of money, I, as well as some other people who were present, stared with our eyes wide open; and I thought I heard the voice of an angel, when the man laying the bag upon a table, pronounced, 'Señor Gil Blas, here is something that my lady marchioness has sent you.' I made many profound bows to the bearer whom I overwhelmed with civility: and he was no sooner gone, than I darted upon the bag, like a hawk upon his prey; and carrying it to my chamber, untied it, without loss of time, and found in it a thousand ducats. I had just made an end of counting them, when my landlord, who had heard what the porter said, came in to see the contents of the bag. Thunderstruck at the sight of my coin spread upon the table, 'Zounds (cried he), what a vast sum of money is here! You must be a devil among the women (added he, with a satirical smile), for although you have not been four

and twenty hours in Burgos, you have a marchioness already under contribution.'

This discourse did not disgust me; I was tempted to leave Majuelo in his mistake, which already gave me a sensible pleasure: so that I do not wonder that young fellows love to be thought men of intrigue. My innocence, however, got the better of my vanity: I undeceived my landlord, and recounted the story of Doña Mencia, to which he listened with great attention. I then disclosed the state of my affairs, and as he seemed to interest himself in my behalf, begged the assistance of his advice. Having mused a while, 'Señor Gil Blas (said he), I have a regard for you; and since you have confidence enough in me, to unbosom yourself in this manner, I will without flattery tell you what I think you are fittest for. As you seem designed by nature for the court, I advise you to go thither and attach yourself to some grandee: but be sure either to meddle in his concerns, or enter into his pleasures; otherwise you will lose your time. I know the great. They look upon the zeal and attachment of an honest man as nothing at all; and mind only such as are necessary to them. But you have another resource (continued he): you are young and handsome; and these qualifications alone, without the least glimpse of understanding, are more than sufficient to captivate a rich widow, or some fine lady unhappily married: if love ruins gentlemen of fortune, it often maintains those who have none. It is my advice therefore, that you go to Madrid; but you must by no means appear without attendants: they judge there, as in other places, by appearance; and you will be considered only in proportion to the figure you make. I will recommend a servant to you—a faithful domestic—a prudent, sober fellow—in one word, a man of my own making. Purchase a couple of mules, one for yourself, and another for him, and set out as soon as possible.'

This advice was too much to my own taste to be neglected: I therefore next morning bought two handsome mules, and hired the servant he had recom-

mended: he was a fellow thirty years old, of a simple, religious aspect, born, as he said, in the kingdom of Galicia; his name was Ambrose de Lamela; far from being selfish like other servants, he made no words about his wages; but assured me, he would be contented with what in my goodness I should think proper to bestow. Having provided myself likewise with boots, and a portmanteau to hold my linen and cash, I cleared with my landlord, and early next morning, set out from Burgos, on my way to Madrid.

CHAPTER XVI

Shows that we ought not to trust too much to prosperity

We slept the first night at Dueñas, and arriving at Valladolid the day following about four o'clock in the afternoon, alighted at an inn, which seemed one of the best in town. I left the care of my mules to my lackey, and going upstairs into a chamber whither I ordered a servant of the house to bring my portmanteau, felt myself a little fatigued, and without taking off my boots, threw myself on the bed, where I fell asleep insensibly. It being almost night when I wakened, I called for Ambrose, who was gone out, but returned in a little time; when I asked where he had been, he replied with a pious air, that he was just come from church, where he had been to return thanks to heaven, for having preserved him from all evil accidents on the road from Burgos even unto Valladolid: I approved of his conduct, and bade him order a fowl to the fire for my supper.

At that very instant, my landlord entered with a taper in his hand, lighting in a lady who seemed more handsome than young, and very richly dressed: she was squired by an old usher, and a little blackamoor carried her train[1]. I was not a little surprised when this lady, after having made a low curtsy, asked

[1] The ensuing story of Camilla's imposture is adapted from *Marcos de Obregon*, Relacion III, Descansos viii, ix.

if I was not Señor Gil Blas de Santillana, to which I had no sooner answered in the affirmative, than she quitted her attendant, and embraced me with a transport of joy that redoubled my astonishment. 'Blessed be heaven (cried she) for this meeting! You are the person, Señor Cavalier, you are the very person I was in quest of!' At this preamble I thought of the parasite at Peñaflor; and began to look upon the lady as a downright bite; when I was induced to think more favourably of her, by what followed. 'I am (added she) cousin-german to Doña Mencia of Mosquera, who has been so much obliged to you; and received a letter from her this morning, importing that having heard you was going to Madrid, I would oblige her very much, by treating you handsomely, provided you should pass this way: I have been running all over the town these two hours, inquiring from inn to inn, about all the strangers that arrived; and by the description your landlord gave me of you, I imagined you might be the deliverer of my cousin. Ah! now that I have found you (continued she) you shall see how sensible I am of the services you have done my family, and in particular, to my dear cousin! You shall come to my house immediately (if you please), where you will be more conveniently lodged than here.' I would have excused myself, by representing to the lady, that I should incommode her family; but there was no resisting her importunities: there was a coach waiting for us at the door, in which she took care to see my portmanteau secured; 'because (said she) there are a great many rogues in Valladolid': an observation I found but too true! In short, I went into the coach along with her and her squire, and suffered myself to be carried away from the inn, to the mortification of the landlord, who by these means found himself disappointed of the money which he expected I would spend at his house.

Our coach having rolled some time, stopped at a pretty large house, where we alighted and went upstairs into a handsome apartment lighted by twenty

or thirty wax-candles. We passed through a good many servants, of whom the lady asked if Don Raphael was come yet; and was answered in the negative; upon which, addressing herself to me, 'Señor Gil Blas (said she), I have a brother whom I expect this evening from a villa we have two leagues from this: he will be very agreeably surprised to find in this house, a gentleman to whom our whole family is so much indebted.' She had scarce spoke these words, when we heard a noise below, which (we were told) was occasioned by the arrival of Don Raphael; and that cavalier, who was a young man of good shape and genteel address, appeared soon after. 'Brother (said the lady to him), I am extremely glad of your return! you will assist me in doing honour to Señor Gil Blas de Santillana; to whom we can never enough shew our gratitude for what he has done in behalf of our kinswoman Doña Mencia: there (added she, giving him a letter) you may read what she has wrote on the subject.' Don Raphael opening the letter, pronounced these words aloud.

'My dear Camilla,

'Señor Gil Blas de Santillana, who preserved my honour as well as my life, has set out for court; and as he will, doubtless, pass through Valladolid, I conjure you by the blood, and still more, by the friendship that unites us, to shew him all the respect in your power, and detain him some time in your family. I flatter myself, that you will give me that satisfaction, and that my deliverer will receive all manner of civility from you and my cousin Don Raphael. At Burgos, your affectionate kinswoman,

Doña Mencia.

'How! (cried Don Raphael) is this the gentleman to whom my cousin owes her honour and life? ah! heaven be praised for this happy encounter!' So saying, he approached, and clasping me in his arms, 'What joy do I feel (said he), in embracing Señor Gil Blas de Santillana! my cousin the marchioness

had no occasion to lay such injunctions upon us: it would have been sufficient to let us know that you was to pass through Valladolid; my sister and I know very well how to behave ourselves towards a gentleman who has performed such an important piece of service to the person for whom, of all our family, we have the most tender regard.' I answered, as well as I could, to these compliments, which were followed by a great many more of the same nature, and interspersed with a thousand caresses: after which, perceiving that my boots were still on, they ordered their servants to pull them off; and we went into another room, where, the cloth being laid, the gentleman, lady, and I, sat down to supper; during which, they said a thousand obliging things to me: not a word escaped me, which they did not repeat as an admirable stroke of wit; and it was surprising to see how attentive they were in presenting me with all the daintiest morsels. Don Raphael drank frequently to the health of Doña Mencia, in which I followed his example; and I imagined that Camilla, who did us justice, sometimes threw certain very significant looks at me. I even observed that she choose proper opportunities for so doing, as if she had been afraid that her brother would perceive it. This was enough to persuade me of the lady's being smitten; and I flattered myself with the hope of profiting by that discovery, during my short stay at Valladolid. This hope induced me to yield, without difficulty, to their entreaties, when they requested me to spend a few days with them. They thanked me for my complaisance, and the joy which Camilla discovered, on this occasion, confirmed me in the opinion, that I had found the way to her heart.

Don Raphael seeing me determined to stay with him some time, proposed to carry me to his country house, of which he gave me a magnificent description; and talked of the pleasures he would there entertain me with. 'Sometimes (said he) we will take the diversion of hunting, sometimes that of fishing; and

if you love walking, we have delightful woods and gardens in abundance: besides, we shall not want good company; and, on the whole, I hope you will not grow melancholy among us.' I accepted his offer, and it was determined that we should go to this charming place the very next day. Having projected this agreeable scheme, we rose from table; and Don Raphael embracing me, in a transport of joy, said, 'Señor Gil Blas, I will leave my sister to entertain you, while I go immediately to give necessary orders, and advertise those people whom I intend shall be of the party.' So saying, he went out of the room, and I continued conversing with the lady, who did not contradict, by her discourse, the soft glances she had thrown at me. She took hold of my hand, and looking at my ring, said, 'You have got a pretty diamond enough, but it is a very small one. Are you a connoisseur in stones?' When I answered in the negative, 'I am sorry for it (said she), for you might have told me what this is worth.' With these words, she showed me a large ruby on her finger, and, while I examined it, added, 'An uncle of mine, who was governor of the Spanish colonies in the Philippine Isles, made me a present of this ruby, which the jewellers here in Valladolid value at three hundred pistoles.' 'I believe it is well worth the money (said I), for it is extremely beautiful.' 'Since you are pleased with it (she replied), I will make an exchange with you.' And immediately she pulled off my ring, and put her own on my little finger. Having made this exchange, which I looked upon as a genteel way of making a present, Camilla squeezed my hand, and looked at me in the most languishing manner; then starting up abruptly, wished me good night, and withdrew in great confusion, as if she had been ashamed of disclosing her sentiments.

Novice as I was in gallantry, I knew well enough how to interpret this precipitate retreat in my favour, and concluded that I should pass my time very agreeably at their villa. Full of this flattering idea, and the prosperous condition of my affairs, I locked myself

in the chamber where I was to lie, after having ordered my servant to come and wake me early in the morning; but instead of going to rest, I gave a loose to those agreeable reflections, which my portmanteau, that lay on the table, and my ruby, inspired. Thank heaven! said I to myself, if I have been unfortunate, I am no longer so. On one side a thousand ducats; a ring, worth three hundred pistoles, on the other! My finances will not be exhausted in a hurry! I see now that Majuelo did not flatter me. I shall inflame the hearts of a thousand ladies at Madrid, since I have made such an easy conquest of Camilla! The favours of that generous lady presented themselves to my imagination, with all their charms; and I anticipated the diversions that Don Raphael prepared for me at his house in the country. In the midst of these pleasing images, however, sleep did not fail to shed his poppies over me; so that, finding myself drowsy, I undressed, and went to bed.

Next morning, when I awaked, I perceived that it was already late, and was a good deal surprised that my valet did not appear in consequence of the order I had given him over night. Ambrose, said I to myself, my faithful Ambrose, is either at church, or very lazy to-day. But I soon lost that opinion of him, and conceived one much worse; for getting up, and missing my portmanteau, I suspected him of having stole it in the night. For further information, I opened the chamber-door, and called the hypocrite several times; at last, an old man hearing me, came and said, 'What would you please to have, Señor? all your people departed from my house long before day.' 'How! (cried I) your house! am I not at present in the house of Don Raphael?' 'I don't know who that gentleman is (said he), but you are in furnished lodgings, and I am the landlord: last night, an hour before your arrival, the lady who supped along with you came hither, and hired this apartment for a great lord, who, she said, travelled *incognito*; and even paid me beforehand.'

I was no longer in the dark ; I guessed the characters of Camilla and Don Raphael, and concluded that my servant being perfectly well acquainted with my affairs, had sold me to these sharpers. Instead of ascribing this unlucky adventure to myself, and considering that it would not have happened to me, had I not been so indiscreet as to unbosom myself unnecessarily to Majuelo, I imputed all to innocent fortune, and cursed my fate a thousand times. The owner of the house, to whom I recounted the adventure, which, perhaps, he knew as well as I did, seemed affected with my sorrow, condoled me, and protested that he was very much mortified to find that such a scene had passed in his house : but I believe, notwithstanding all his professions, he was as much concerned in the trick as my landlord at Burgos, to whom, however, I have always attributed the honour of the invention.

CHAPTER XVII

How Gil Blas bestowed himself after the adventure of the ready-furnished lodging

Having heartily bewailed my misfortune, I considered, that instead of giving way to sorrow, I ought to animate myself against mischance ; and summoning all my courage to my assistance, said to myself, while I put on my clothes, by way of consolation, I am happy in that the rogues have not also carried off my apparel, and some ducats which I have still in my purse : I gave them credit for this piece of civility, and sold my boots, which they had been generous enough to leave likewise, to my landlord, for one-third of the money they had cost me. Then taking my leave of the ready-furnished lodging ; without having occasion, thank God ! for anybody to carry my baggage ; the first thing I did, was to go and see whether or not my mules were at the inn, where I alighted the preceding night ; though I was of opinion

that Ambrose had not left them there; and I wish to God, my opinion of him had been always as just! for they told me, he had taken care to fetch them away that very evening: wherefore, laying my account with having seen the last of them, as well as of my portmanteau, I strolled about the streets in a melancholy manner, musing on what should be my next course. I was tempted to return to Burgos, and have recourse to Doña Mencia once more; but when I reflected, that in so doing I should abuse the generosity of the lady, and, at the same time, be looked upon as a booby, I relinquished that thought, swearing I should, for the future, be upon my guard against women; and I believe, at that time, I should have mistrusted the chaste Susanna. I cast my eyes, from time to time, upon my ring, and when I considered that it was a present from Camilla, sighed with vexation. Alas! thought I, though I am no connoisseur in rubies, I have too good reason to know those who exchange them; and I believe it is not necessary that I should go to a jeweller, to be persuaded that I am a fool.

I was willing, however, to be informed of the worth of my ring, and accordingly showed it to a lapidary, who valued it at three ducats. Though I was not surprised at this estimation, I wished the niece of the governor of the Philippine Isles at the devil, or rather, only repeated the wish. As I came out of the jeweller's house, a young fellow, who was passing, stopped to consider me. Not being able to recollect him at first, although I had formerly been intimate with him, 'How, Gil Blas! (said he) do you pretend ignorance of me, or have two years altered the son of Barber Nuñez so much, that you do not know him? don't you remember Fabricio, your companion and schoolfellow, with whom you have so often disputed, at the house of Doctor Godinez, upon predicables and metaphysical degrees?'

I remembered him before he had done speaking, and we embraced one another with transport. 'My dear friend (continued he) how glad am I to meet

thee! I can't express the joy I feel. But (added he, with an air of surprise), what do I see! egad! thou art dressed like a prince! a fine sword, silk stockings, doublet and cloak of velvet embroidered with silver[1]! Odd's nigers! this smells strong of intrigues! I'll hold a wager, that thou sharest the bounty of some liberal old lady.' 'You are mistaken (said I), my affairs are not so flourishing as you imagine.' 'Pshaw, pshaw (replied he), you affect to be a close fellow; that fine ruby on your finger, Mr. Gil Blas, whence comes that, I pray you?' 'It comes (said I) from an arrant jade. Fabricio, my dear Fabricio, far from being in vogue among the women at Valladolid, know that I am a most ridiculous dupe.'

I pronounced these last words so ruefully, that Fabricio was convinced of my having been imposed upon, in some shape or other; and pressed me to tell him what were my reasons for complaining of the fair sex. I was easily prevailed upon to satisfy his curiosity; but as my story was pretty long, and, besides, we had no intention of parting in a hurry, we went into a public-house, that we might converse together more at our ease; and there, while we breakfasted, I recounted to him all that had happened to me, since my departure from Oviedo. He thought my adventures were extremely odd, and after having assured me, that he very much sympathized with me, in my present unlucky situation, said, 'We must console ourselves, my child, as well as we can, for all the misfortunes of life. When a man of spirit is unlucky, he waits with patience for a more favourable conjuncture. One should never, as Cicero says, let himself be so much dejected as to forget that he is a man[2]. For my own part, I am of that very disposition: my misfortunes have not been able to overwhelm me, because I am always above the caprice of fate. For instance, I loved a girl of some fashion at Oviedo, who

[1] Cf. Chapter xv. p. 65, where the suit was said to be 'of blue velvet embroidered with gold.'

[2] *Epistolae ad Familiares*, v, 17.

had a *tendre* for me; I asked her in marriage, of her father, and he refused me. Another, on this occasion, would have died of grief: but I (admire the force of genius), carried off the dear creature: as she was passionate, thoughtless and vain, pleasure, of consequence, always determined her to the prejudice of duty. I led her a dance, for six months, through the kingdom of Galicia, from whence, as I had given her a taste for travelling, she was desirous of going to Portugal; but thought proper to choose a new conductor: here was another subject of despair; but for all that, I did not sink under the weight of it, and wiser than Menelaus, instead of declaring war against the Paris who had stole my Helen, I thought myself very much obliged to him, for having rid my hands of her. Afterwards being unwilling to return to Asturias, that I might avoid all expostulation with justice, I advanced into the kingdom of Leon, spending, from town to town, the remainder of the money I had carried off with my Infanta; for we had quitted Oviedo with the full hand; and arrived at Palencia with a solitary ducat, out of which I was obliged to buy a pair of shoes; so that the remaining part could not last much longer: my situation became very perplexing, and I was even reduced to a very strict regimen: there was no time to be lost, I resolved to go to service, and hired myself to a great woollen-draper, whose son was an accomplished rake. Here, though I found an asylum against hunger, I was not a little embarrassed: for the father ordered me to be a spy upon the son; and the son entreated me to assist him in cheating the father. Being obliged to determine, I preferred the entreaty to the command; and that preference cost me my place. I afterwards went into the service of an old painter, who would have taught me, through friendship, the principles of his art; in the demonstration of which, however, I was almost famished. This gave me a disgust for painting, and a disrelish for Palencia, at the same time; and coming to Valladolid, by the greatest good fortune in

the world, I got into the family of one of the directors of the hospital, where I now live perfectly happy. Señor Manuel Ordoñez, my master, is a man of profound piety, who walks with his eyes always fixed on the ground, and a large rosary in his hand. They say, that from his youth, having nothing in view but the funds of the poor, he attached himself to them with indefatigable zeal; and accordingly his cares have not been ill requited; everything prospers with him. What a blessing it is, that he has made himself rich, in managing the affairs of the poor!'

Fabricio having harangued in this manner, 'I am very glad (said I to him) to find thee so well satisfied with thy condition: but, between you and me, I think you might play a more honourable part in the world.' 'You are mistaken, Gil Blas (answered he), there is no situation in life more agreeable to one of my humour, than that which I now enjoy: the employment of a lackey is troublesome, I own, to a silly fellow; but to a lad of spirit, it is full of charms. A superior genius that goes to service, does not confine himself to the menial circumstances of his duty, like a simpleton: he goes into a family to command rather than obey; he begins by studying his master, he accommodates himself to his foibles, gains his confidence, and then leads him by the nose. 'Tis thus that I have behaved towards my director. I soon discovered his hypocrisy, and perceived that he wanted to pass for a person of great sanctity: I pretended to be his dupe; that costs nothing. I did more, I imitated him, and acting in his presence, the same farce that he plays before others, I deceived the deceiver, and am, by degrees, become his factotum. Under his auspices, I hope one day to be concerned in the affairs of the poor; in which case, I may chance to make my fortune too, for I find myself as well inclined towards them, as he can be for his heart.'

'These are fine hopes (replied I), my dear Fabricio: I congratulate thee upon thy prospect; and for my own part, will have recourse to my former scheme:

convert my embroidered habit into a cassock, repair to Salamanca, and lifting myself under the banners of the university, perform the office of a tutor.' 'A fine project truly ! (cried Fabricio) an agreeable whim ! what a fool wouldst thou be, to turn pedant at thy age ! dost thou know, wretch ! what thou art about to do ? Soon as thou shalt be employed, the whole family will have their eyes on thee, and all thy actions will be scrupulously examined : thou must be eternally under constraint, clothe thyself with hypocrisy, and appear possessed of every virtue. Thou wilt not have a moment to bestow upon thy pleasures. Like a perpetual censor of thy pupil, thou must pass the day in teaching him Latin, and in rebuking him, when he shall say or do anything amiss : and after so much labour and constraint, what will be the fruit of thy cares ? If the little gentleman wants capacity, it will be said, thou hast not given him good education ; and his parents will turn thee away, without any recompense, perhaps, even without paying thy appointments. Don't therefore talk to me of a preceptor's post, which is like a benefice with cure of souls : but commend me to the employment of a lackey, which is a simple benefice, encumbered with no charge. When a master has vices, a superior genius in his service will flatter them, and often turn them to its advantage. A footman lives in a good family, without the least disquiet ; for after having eaten and drank his bellyful, he sleeps like the son of a lord, and gives himself no trouble about either baker or butcher.

'I should never ha' done, child (continued he), was I to recount all the advantages of footmen. Take my advice, Gil Blas, quit, for ever, the design of becoming tutor, and follow my example.' 'Yes ; but, Fabricio (said I), one does not always meet with directors ; and if I should resolve to turn lackey, I should, at least, choose to be well settled.' 'Oh ! you are in the right (said he), that shall be my business : I will ensure thee a good place, if it was for no other reason, than to snatch a pretty fellow from the university.'

The approaching misery with which I was threatened, and the air of satisfaction that appeared in Fabricio, persuading me more than his reasons, I determined to go to service; whereupon leaving the public-house, my companion said, 'I will conduct you to the house of a person, who is consulted by almost all the footmen out of place: he has spies, who inform him of what happens in all families; he knows where servants are wanted, and keeps an exact register not only of the vacant places, but even of the good and bad qualities of masters[1]: he is one who was formerly a friar in some convent or other; and, in short, 'twas he who recommended me to the place I now enjoy.'

While we conversed about such a singular office of intelligence, the son of barber Nuñez carried me into a blind alley, and we entered a little house, where we found a man about fifty years old, writing at a table. We saluted him very respectfully; but whether he was naturally proud, or accustomed to see lackies and coachmen only, he had contracted an habit of receiving people cavalierly, and did not rise from his seat, but contented himself with making a slight inclination of the head. He looked hard at me, however, and I could easily perceive he was very much surprised that a young man, dressed in embroidered velvet, should want to turn valet; he had more reason to think I was come to be provided with one: but he did not continue long in suspense, with regard to my intention; for Fabricio accosting him at once, said, 'Señor Arias de Londona[2], give me leave to present one of my best friends to you: he is a young man of a good family, whom misfortunes have reduced to the necessity of going to service. Pray inform him of a

[1] A somewhat similar registry-office was opened at Paris in Lesage's time by a man named Herpin: see s. v. 'Nomenclator,' *Novitius seu dictionarium magnum latino-gallicum* (Paris, 1721), p. 908.

[2] This name recalls that of Antonio de Londoña, described as a learned musician in *Marcos de Obregon*, Relacion III, Descanso v.

good place, and depend upon his gratitude.' 'Gentlemen (answered Arias, coldly), this is the manner of you all: before you are fixed, you make the finest promises in the world, but once you are well settled, you think no more of them.' 'How! (replied Fabricio) do you complain of me? have not I done honourably by you?' 'You might have done better still (said Arias), your place is worth a clerk's employment; and you have paid me, as if I had introduced you to the house of an author.' Here I interposed, and told Señor Arias, that, to show him I was not ungrateful, my acknowledgement should precede his service; at the same time, taking out two ducats, I put them into his hand; with a promise, that I would not stop there, provided I should find myself in a good family.

He seemed pleased with my behaviour, and said he loved to be treated in that manner: 'There are (continued he) excellent posts vacant, which I will mention in order, that you may choose one that is to your liking.' So saying, he put on his spectacles, opened a register, which lay on the table, turned over some leaves, and began to read as follows: 'A lackey is wanted for Captain Torbellino, a passionate, cruel, whimsical man, who grumbles incessantly, swears, beats and, commonly, maims his servants.' 'Let us pass on to another (cried I, at that picture), that captain is not to my taste.' Arias smiled at my vivacity, and proceeded in this manner: 'Doña Manuela of Sandoval, a superannuated widow, full of peevishness and caprice, has, at present, never a footman: she keeps but one for ordinary, and him never a whole day. There has been one livery suit in the house these ten years, which serves all valets who enter, of what size and shape soever they may be: but it may be said they only try it on; for it is still as good as new, although it has been worn by two thousand lackies. Doctor Alvar Fañez[1], a physician and chemist, wants a servant: his domestics are well fed, handsomely entertained, and have, moreover,

[1] This is an historic name borne by the Cid's lieutenant.

great wages; but he tries experiments upon them, with his medicines, and there are often vacant places in his house.' 'Oh! I believe it (cried Fabricio, laughing), upon my conscience, you show us abundance of fine places.' 'Have patience (said Arias de Londona), we have not yet done; there are some that, I am sure, will please you.' Then he continued to read in these terms. 'Doña Alfonsa de Solis, an old devotee, who spends two-thirds of the day at church, and insists upon her footman's being always along with her, has not had a lackey these three weeks. The Licentiate Sedillo[1], an old canon of the chapter of this city, yesterday, in the evening, turned away his footman.' 'Halt there, Señor Arias de Londona (cried Fabricio, in this place), we will stick to this last post. The Licentiate Sedillo is one of my master's friends, with whom I am perfectly well acquainted: I know that he has for housekeeper an old devotee called Dame Jacinta, who disposes of everything in the house: it is one of the best families in Valladolid, for a servant who loves a quiet life and good cheer: besides, the canon is old and infirm, very much subject to the gout, and will soon make his will; so that there is room to hope for a good legacy. What a charming prospect for a footman! Gil Blas (added he, turning towards me), let us lose no time, my lad, but go instantly to the house of the licentiate, where I will myself present you, and answer for thy character.' At these words, for fear of losing such a fair opportunity, we took our leave, in a hurry, of Señor Arias, who assured me for my money, that if I should be balked of this place, I might depend upon his recommending me to one as good.

[1] A Doctor Sedillo is mentioned in *Marcos de Obregon*, Relacion III, Descanso iv.

THE END OF THE FIRST BOOK

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

Fabricio conducts Gil Blas, and introduces him to the Licentiate Sedillo. The situation of this canon. A description of his housekeeper

We were so much afraid of coming too late, that we made but one leap from the alley to the house of the old licentiate. We knocked at the door, which was opened by a girl of ten years old, who passed for the housekeeper's niece, in spite of scandal; and asking if the canon could be spoke with, Dame Jacinta appeared: she was a person already arrived at the age of discretion, but still handsome; and, in particular, I admired the freshness of her complexion. She wore a long gown of coarse stuff, with a large leathern girdle, from one side of which hung a bunch of keys, and from the other a rosary of great beads. As soon as we perceived her, we bowed with profound respect, and she returned the salute very civilly, but with a modest deportment and downcast eyes.

'Having understood (said my comrade to her) that master Licentiate Sedillo has occasion for an honest valet, I am come to present one, with whom, I hope, he will be satisfied.' The housekeeper, at these words, lifting her eyes, surveyed me with attention, and, not being able to reconcile my embroidery with the discourse of Fabricio, asked if it was I who wanted the vacant place. 'Yes (said the son of Nuñez), it is this young man, who, notwithstanding his appearance, has met with misfortunes that oblige him to go to service. But he will soon forget his

mishaps (added he, with an insinuating air), if he has the happiness to come into this family, and live with the virtuous Jacinta who deserves to be housekeeper to the Patriarch of the Indies.' At these words, this pious governante moved her eyes from me, to consider the polite person who spoke, and, struck with his features, which were not altogether unknown to her, 'I have (said she) a confused notion of having seen you somewhere; pray assist my recollection.' 'Chaste Jacinta (answered Fabricio), I am proud of having attracted your notice: I have been twice in this house, with my master Señor Manuel Ordoñez, director of the hospital.' 'Ha! you're in the right (replied the housekeeper), I remember it very well, and recollect your face. Ah! since you belong to Señor Ordoñez, you must be a lad of worth and honesty: your place proclaims your virtue; and this young man could not have a better recommendation. Come (added she), I will bring you to speak with Señor Sedillo, who, I believe, will be very glad to have a servant of your presenting.'

We followed her accordingly. The canon lodged on the ground-floor, which consisted of four rooms well wainscoted; in one of which, she desired us to wait a little, while she went into the next, where the licentiate was. After she had stayed with him some time, in order to give him his cue, she came and told us that we might go in. We perceived the old goutified canon buried as it were, in an elbow-chair, with pillows under his head and arms, and his legs supported on a large down cushion. While we approached him, we did not spare bows; and Fabricio being still spokesman, not only repeated what he had said of me to the housekeeper, but likewise extolled my merit, and enlarged, chiefly, on the honour which I had acquired in philosophical disputes, while I was with Doctor Godinez; as if it was necessary, that a canon's footman should be a profound philosopher. Nevertheless, this fine eulogium that he bestowed on me, did not fail to cast a mist before the eyes of the licentiate,

who observing, besides, that I was not disagreeable to Dame Jacinta, said to my recommender, 'Friend, I take into my service the young man whom thou hast brought. I am satisfied, and conceive a favourable opinion of his morals, since he is presented by a domestic of my good friend Señor Ordoñez.'

As soon as Fabricio saw that I was engaged, he made a low bow to the canon, another still lower to the governante, and withdrew, very well satisfied, after having whispered to me that we should see one another often, and that I had nothing to do but to stay where I was. When he was gone, the licentiate asked my name, and reasons for leaving my native country; and by these questions engaged me, in presence of Dame Jacinta, to recount my story. They were both very much diverted, especially with the account of my last adventure, Camilla and Don Raphael tickling them so much, that it was like to have cost the old canon his life; for while he laughed with all his force, he was seized with such a violent fit of coughing, that I imagined it would have been his last. As he had not yet made his will, you may easily guess how his housekeeper was alarmed: trembling and astonished she ran to the assistance of the good man, rubbed his forehead, and clapped him on the back, as is practised with children when they have the chin-cough. However, this was but a false alarm: the old man ceased to cough, and his governante to torment him; and I would have finished my story, had not Dame Jacinta, who dreaded another fit, opposed it, and carried me out of the canon's chamber into a wardrobe, where, among several suits of clothes, was that of my predecessor. This she made me put on, and leave my own in its room, which I was not sorry to preserve, in hopes that it would still be of use to me. After which we went to prepare dinner.

I was not a novice in the art of dressing victuals, having served a happy apprenticeship under Dame Leonarda, who might have passed for a good cook: she was not, however, comparable to Dame Jacinta,

who, for aught I know, would have gained the palm from the cook of the Archbishop of Toledo. She excelled in everything: her soups were exquisite, on account of her art in choosing and mixing the different kinds of gravy, of which they were composed; and her hashes were seasoned in such a manner, as rendered them extremely agreeable to the palate. When dinner was ready, we returned into the canon's chamber, where, while I laid the cloth on a table set just by his elbow-chair, the housekeeper tucked a napkin under the old man's chin, and tied it over his shoulders. In a moment after I brought in a mess of porridge, that might have been presented to the most celebrated director of Madrid; and two courses, which would have stimulated the sensuality of a viceroy, had not Dame Jacinta been sparing of her spices, for fear of inflaming the gout of the licentiate. At sight of these delicate dishes, my old master, whom I believed impotent in all his members, showed me that he had not as yet lost entirely the use of his arms: he helped to disencumber himself of his pillows, and cheerfully prepared himself for eating. Though his hand shook, it did not refuse its service, but went and came with great expedition; in such a manner, however, that it spilt upon the tablecloth and napkin one half of what was intended for his mouth. I took away the soup when he had done with it, and brought in a roasted partridge, flanked with two quails, which Dame Jacinta carved for him. She took care also to make him drink frequently large draughts of wine, a little diluted in a large and deep silver cup, which she held to his mouth, as if he had been a child of fifteen months. He fell tooth and nail upon his course, and did no less honour to the birds than he had done to the porridge; and when he had stuffed himself to the tongue, the devotee untied his napkin, replaced his pillows, and left him in quiet to take his afternoon's nap in his chair; while we, having uncovered the table, went to dinner in our turn.

In this manner did our canon dine everyday, who,

for aught I know, was the greatest glutton of the whole chapter. Though his supper was commonly more slight, consisting, for the most part, of a pullet and some conserves. I fed well in this house, and lived a very peaceable life, having only one grievance, which was no other than being obliged to watch my master, and pass the whole night like a nurse. Besides a retention of urine, that obliged him to ask for his chamber-pot ten times in an hour, he was subject to profuse sweats; and when these happened, it was my business to shift him. 'Gil Blas (said he, the second night), thou hast activity and address; and I foresee that I shall be very well pleased with thy service. I recommend to thee above all things to behave thyself respectfully towards Dame Jacinta: she is a wench who has served me these fifteen years with a singular zeal, and takes such care of my person, that I can never enough show my gratitude: wherefore I own she is more dear to me than all my relations. For the love of her I have turned out of doors my nephew, my own sister's son, who paid no respect to the poor girl; and, far from doing justice to the sincere attachment she has for me, the insolent boy treated her as an hypocrite; for in this age all virtue appears hypocrisy to young people. Thank heaven! I have got rid of the scoundrel: I prefer the love that is manifested for me to all the ties of blood, and am swayed only by the benefits I receive.' 'You are in the right, sir, (said I to the licentiate): gratitude ought to have more weight with us than the laws of nature.' 'Doubtless (he replied); and people will see by my last will, that I have no regard for my relations. My housekeeper will have a good share, and thou shalt not be forgot, provided that thou goest on to serve me, as thou hast begun. The footman whom I turned away yesterday, has lost a good legacy by his own folly: if that paltry fellow had not, by his misbehaviour, obliged me to dismiss him, I would have made his fortune; but he was a proud coxcomb, who was deficient in his respect for Dame Jacinta; and an idle rascal, who dreaded

the smallest trouble. He, forsooth, did not love to watch over me; and looked upon it as a great fatigue to spend the night in contributing to my ease.' 'Ah, the wretch! (cried I, as if the genius of my friend had inspired me) he was not worthy of living with such an honourable master! A lad who has the happiness of appertaining unto you, ought to be indefatigable in his zeal: he ought to make a pleasure of his duty, and not think himself fatigued, even when he sweats blood and water for your service.'

I perceived that these words were very agreeable to the licentiate, who was no less satisfied with the assurance I gave him of being always perfectly resigned to the will of Dame Jacinta. Willing therefore to pass for a valet whom fatigue could not dispirit, I did my duty with the best grace I could assume, and never complained of being up all night; a circumstance which, however, I found very disagreeable; and had it not been for the legacy with which I fed my hopes, I should have been very soon disgusted with my condition. Indeed I slept some hours in the day-time; and the governante to do her justice, had a good deal of regard for me. This must be ascribed to the care I took in gaining her good graces, by the most complaisant and respectful behaviour: when I was at table with her and her niece, whose name was Inesilla, I shifted their plates, filled wine, and served them with a most particular attention; by which means I insinuated myself into their friendship. One day, while Dame Jacinta was gone out to market seeing myself alone with Inesilla, I began to converse with her, and asked if her father and mother were still alive. 'O! not at all (answered she), they are dead long, long ago: my good aunt told me so. As for my own part, I never saw them.' I sincerely believed the little girl, though her answer was not categorical; and put her into such a humour of talking, that she told me more of the matter than I wanted to know. She informed me, or rather I gathered from her artless chat, that her good aunt had a very good friend, who

lived likewise with an old canon, whose temporalities he managed; and that these happy domestics expected to join the pillage of their masters by a marriage, the sweets of which they tasted beforehand. I have already observed that Dame Jacinta, though somewhat superannuated, had still a freshness of complexion. True, indeed, she spared nothing to preserve it; for, besides a clyster which she took every morning, she swallowed during the day, and when she went to bed, some excellent jellies of her own composing, and slept soundly all night, while I watched my master: but that which, perhaps, contributed more than anything to preserve her colour from fading, was an issue, which Inesilla told me she had in each leg.

CHAPTER II

In what manner the canon was treated when he fell sick: —the consequence of it; and the legacy which he left to Gil Blas

I SERVED the Licentiate Sedillo three months without complaining of the bad nights he made me pass; at the end of which time he fell sick of a fever, and felt his gout increased by the pain which it occasioned; so that, for the first time in his life, which had been long, he had recourse to physicians, and sent for Doctor Sangrado[1], whom all Valladolid looked upon as another Hippocrates. Dame Jacinta would have been better pleased, if the canon had begun by making his will, and even dropped some hints on the subject; but, besides that he did not believe himself near his end, in some certain things he was extremely obstinate. I therefore went in search of Doctor Sangrado, and brought him to the house. He was a tall, meagre, pale man, who had kept the shears of Clotho employed during

[1] This name is a variant of Sagredo, the doctor who is introduced in *Marcos de Obregon*, Relacion I, Descanso ii.

forty years at least[1]. This learned physician had a very solemn appearance, weighed his discourse, and gave an emphasis to his expressions: his reasoning was geometrical, and his opinions extremely singular.

After having examined the symptoms of my master's disease, he said to him with a very physical air, 'The business here is to supply the defect of perspiration, which is obstructed: others, in my place, would doubtless prescribe saline draughts, diuretics, diaphoretics, and such medicines as abound with mercury and sulphur; but cathartics and sudorifics are pernicious drugs, and all the preparations of chemistry are only calculated to do mischief: for my own part, I practise a method more simple, and more sure. Pray, what is your ordinary diet?' 'My usual food (replied the canon) is broth and juicy meat.' 'Broth and juicy meat! (cried the doctor, surprised) truly, I do not wonder to find you sick: such delicious victuals are poisoned pleasures, and snares that luxury spreads for mankind, in order to ruin them the more effectually. You must renounce all palatable food: the most salutary is that which is most insipid; for as the blood is insipid, it requires such victuals as partake the most of its own nature. And do you drink wine?' (added he). 'Yes (said the licentiate), wine diluted.' 'O! diluted as much as you please (replied the physician): what an irregularity is here! what a frightful regimen! you ought to have been dead long ago. How old are you, pray?' 'I am going in my sixty-ninth year' (replied the canon). 'Right (said the physician), an early old age is always the fruit of intemperance. If you had drank nothing else than pure water all your life, and had been satisfied with simple nourishment, such as boiled apples for example, you would not now be tormented with the gout, and all your limbs would

[1] The original reads: '*C'était un grand homme sec et pâle, et qui depuis quarante ans, pour le moins, occupait le ciseau des Parques.*' Lachesis and Atropos spun, while Clotho alone cut the thread. The translator has corrected Lesage's oversight.

perform their functions with ease. I do not despair, however, of setting you to rights again, provided you be wholly resigned to my directions.'

The licentiate having promised to obey him in all things, Sangrado sent me for a surgeon whom he named and ordered him to take from my master six good porringers of blood, as the first effort, in order to supply the want of perspiration[1]. Then he said to the surgeon, 'Master Martin Onez, return in three hours, and take as much more; and repeat the same evacuation to-morrow. It is a gross error to think that blood is necessary for the preservation of life: a patient cannot be blooded too much; for as he is obliged to perform no considerable motion or exercise, but just only to breathe, he has no more occasion for blood than a man who is asleep; life, in both, consisting in the pulse and respiration only.' The doctor having ordered frequent and copious evacuations of this kind, he told us, that we must make the canon drink warm water incessantly; assuring us that water, drank in abundance, was the true specific in all distempers whatever. And when he went away, he told Dame Jacinta and me, with an air of confidence, that he would answer for his patient's life, provided we would treat him in the manner he had prescribed. The governante, who possibly thought otherwise of his method, protested that it should be followed with the utmost exactness. Accordingly we set about warming water with all dispatch; and as the physician had recommended to us, above all things, not to be too sparing of it, we made my master drink for the first dose two or three pints, at as many draughts. An hour after we repeated it, and returning to the charge, from time to time, overwhelmed his stomach with a deluge of water: the surgeon seconding us, on the other hand, by the quantity of blood which he drew from

[1] This is a hit at the fashionable Parisian doctor Philippe Hecquet, author of an *Explication physique et mécanique des effets de la saignée par rapport à la transpiration* (Paris, 1706).

him, in less than two days the old canon was reduced to extremity.

This good priest being quite spent, said to me with a feeble voice, as I presented him with a large glass of the specific, 'Hold, Gil Blas, give me no more of it, my friend: I see plainly that I must die, in spite of the virtues of water; and though there is scarce a drop of blood left in my body, I don't find myself a whit the better; which is a plain proof, that the most expert physician in the world cannot prolong our days, when their fatal period is arrived: go therefore and fetch a notary, for I want to make my will.' At these last words, which I was not sorry to hear, I affected to seem melancholy, and concealing the desire I had to execute his commission, 'Well, but, sir (said I), you are not yet so low, thank God, but that you may recover.' 'No, no, child (replied he), it is all over with me: I feel the gout mounting upwards, and death approaching. Make haste, therefore, and do as I bid thee.' I perceived, sure enough, that he changed visibly, and the affair appeared so urgent, that I went out as fast as possible to fulfil his orders; leaving with him Dame Jacinta, who was more afraid than I that he would die intestate. I went into the house of the first notary I was directed to, and finding him at home, 'Sir (said I), the Licentiate Sedillo, my master, draws towards his end, and wants to have his last will made; so that there is not a moment to lose.' The notary, who was a brisk old man, and took delight in rallying, asked what physician attended the canon; I answered, Doctor Sangrado. At that name, seizing his hat and cloak in a hurry, 'Zooks! (cried he) let us make haste; for the doctor is so expeditious, that he seldom gives his patients time to send for notaries: that man has choused me out of a great many jobs.'

So saying, he followed me with great eagerness, and while we walked together at a good pace, that we might arrive before he should be at the last gasp, 'Sir (said I to him), you know that a testator at the point of death is apt to forget things: now, if my master

should not remember me, I beg you will remind him of my zeal and attachment.' 'That I will, my child (replied the little notary): thou mayest depend upon me for that. I will even advise him to give thee something considerable; let him be never so little disposed to reward thy service.' The licentiate, when we came into his chamber, had still the use of his senses, and Dame Jacinta, who was with him, her visage bathed in tears which she had at command, had played her part, and bespoke the good man's benevolence. So that she and I left the notary alone with him, and went into the antechamber, where, meeting the surgeon whom the doctor had sent to make one evacuation more, we stopped him. 'Hold, Mr. Martin (said the governante), you cannot go into Señor Sedillo's chamber at present; he is dictating his last will to a notary who is with him; when that is done, you shall have leave to do your office.'

This pious gentlewoman and I were much afraid, that the licentiate would die before his will could be finished: but happily for us, the deed that occasioned our disquiet was executed: and the notary finding me in his way, as he came out, clapped me on the shoulder, saying with a smile, 'Gil Blas is not forgotten.' These words inspired me with excessive joy; and I thought myself so much obliged to my master for having remembered me, that I promised to pray with all my heart for his soul, after his death, which soon happened; for the surgeon having blooded him again, the poor old man, who was but too much exhausted before, expired almost during the operation. As he breathed his last sighs, the physician came in, and looked very foolish, notwithstanding his long practice of dispatching patients. Nevertheless, far from imputing the canon's death to his watery draughts and evacuations, he observed as he went out, with an air of indifference, that the patient had not lost blood enough, nor drank a sufficient quantity of warm water. While the executioner of this sublime art, I mean the surgeon, seeing also, that there was

no more occasion for his office, followed Doctor Sangrado.

As soon as the breath went out of our patron's body, Dame Jacinta, Inesilla, and I, raised a concert of mournful cries which were heard all over the neighbourhood: the governante especially, who had the greatest cause to rejoice, uttered such doleful accents, that one would have thought she was the most afflicted person upon earth; and the chamber was instantly filled with people drawn thither, more by curiosity than compassion. The relations of the deceased no sooner learned the news of his death, than they poured into the house, to seal up everything; and found the housekeeper in such affliction, that they imagined at first, the canon had not made his will: but they soon understood that there was one sanctioned by all the usual formalities; which when they came to open, and saw that the testator had disposed of his best effects in favour of Dame Jacinta and the little girl, they made his funeral speech in terms not much to the honour of his memory: they pronounced an eulogium on the devotee, at the same time, and even bestowed some praises on me, who, I must own, deserved some at their hands: for the licentiate (rest his soul!) in order to make me remember him as long as I should live, explained himself in an article of his will, with regard to me, in this manner.—'Item, as Gil Blas is a young man of some understanding already, in order to complete his learning, I leave to him my library, all my books and manuscripts without exception.'

I could not conceive where this pretended library could be, having never perceived any such thing in the house. I knew only of a few papers, with five or six volumes that stood upon a shelf in my master's closet, and these were my legacy. Though the books could not be of any great service to me, one being entitled, *The Complete Housewife*[1]: another treated of indigestion and the method of cure; the rest

[1] *Le parfait Cuisinier*: possibly a parody of the title of *Le Cuisinier roial et bourgeois* (Paris, 1698).

were the four parts of the breviary, which the moths had almost consumed. With regard to the manuscripts, the most curious contained all the proceedings of a law-suit in which he was once engaged, for his prebend. After having examined the legacy with more attention than it deserved, I left it to the relations who envied me so much. I gave them back the very clothes I wore, and resumed my own; claiming my wages only, as the fruit of my service; and resolving to seek a place elsewhere. As for Dame Jacinta, besides the money which was left to her, she was in possession of some valuable effects, which, by the assistance of her good friend, she had found means to secrete, during the licentiate's last illness.

CHAPTER III

Gil Blas engages himself in the service of Doctor Sangrado, and becomes a celebrated physician

I RESOLVED to visit Señor Arias de Londona and consult his register for a new place; but as I was just going into the blind alley where he lived, I met Doctor Sangrado, whom I had not seen since the death of my master, and took the freedom to salute him. He recollected me immediately, although I had changed my dress, and expressing some joy at seeing me, 'Art thou there, my child? (said he) I was just thinking of thee; having occasion for a good lad to serve me, I imagined that thou wouldst answer my purpose very well, if thou canst read and write.' 'Sir (answered I), in that particular I can do your business.' 'Sayest thou so? (said he) then thou art the man I want: come to my house, where thou shalt find everything agreeable: I will treat thee with distinction; and though I give no wages, thou shalt want for nothing: I will take care to maintain thee handsomely; and will even discover to thee, the great

mystery of curing all diseases; in a word, thou shalt rather be my pupil than my servant.'

I accepted the doctor's proposal, in hopes of making myself illustrious in physic, under the auspices of such a learned master; and he carried me home with him on the instant, in order to initiate me in the employment for which I was designed. This employment consisted in writing the names and places of abode of the patients who sent for him while he was abroad: for this purpose, there was in the house, a register in which an old woman who was his sole domestic set down their several directions: but besides that she was utterly ignorant of spelling, she wrote so ill, that for the most part, it was impossible to decipher her scrawl. I was invested with the charge of this book, which might have been with great justice styled a register of the dead; for almost all the people whose names it contained gave up the ghost. I inserted in it (to use the expression) the names of those people who were to set out for the other world, as the clerk of a stagecoach-office registers those who take places. The pen was seldom out of my hand, because there was not at that time, a physician in Valladolid, of more credit than Doctor Sangrado, who had acquired great reputation with the public, by a pomp of words, a solemn air, and some lucky cures which had done him more honour than he deserved.

He did not want practice, nor of consequence, money, which however, did not make us fare the better, his housekeeper being extremely parsimonious; our ordinary food consisting of peas, beans, boiled codlins, or cheese; which aliments (he said) were agreeable to the stomach, as being most proper for trituration, in other words, easily brayed. Notwithstanding this his opinion, however, he did not approve of our eating a bellyful even of them: in which, to be sure, he was much in the right: but if he forbade his maid and me to eat a great deal, he allowed us, by way of recompense, to drink as much water as we could swallow: far from restricting us in this par-

ticular, he would sometimes say, ' Drink, my children, health consists in the suppleness and humectation of the parts : drink water in great abundance : it is a universal menstruum that dissolves all kinds of salt. When the course of the blood is too languid, this accelerates its motion ; and when too rapid, checks its impetuosity.' The honest doctor was so well convinced of the truth of this doctrine, that he himself drank nothing but water, though he was well stricken in years[1]. He defined old age, a natural decay that withers and consumes us ; and in consequence of this definition, deplored the ignorance of those who call wine ' the milk of old men ': for he maintained that the juice of the grape, wastes and destroys them ; and with great eloquence observed that this fatal liquor is to them, as to all the world, a treacherous friend and deceitful pleasure.

In spite of all this fine reasoning, I had not been eight days in the house, when I was seized with a looseness, and began to feel great disorder in my bowels, which I was rash enough to ascribe to the universal dissolvent and meagre subsistence on which I lived. I complained of it to my master, in hopes that he would relent and allow me a little wine at meals : but he was too much an enemy to that liquor to gratify my expectation. ' If thou feelest in thyself (said he to me) any reluctance to simple element, there are innocent aids in plenty, that will support thy stomach against the insipid taste of water ; sage (for example) and balm will give it an admirable flavour ; and an infusion of corn-poppy, gillyflower, and rosemary, will render it still more delicious.

Notwithstanding all he could say in praise of water and the excellent beverages he taught me to compose,

[1] Hecquet wrote a treatise entitled *Les vertus médicinales de l'eau commune.* But the trait may be taken from Lesage's patron and friend, the Abbé Jules de Lyonne, who drank more than twenty pints of water daily. See the Cheruel-Regnier edition of the *Mémoires du duc de Saint-Simon* (Paris, 1874), xi. 71, xvii. 239.

I drank of it with such moderation, that perceiving my temperance, he said, 'Why, truly, Gil Blas, I am not at all surprised, that thou dost not enjoy good health. Thou dost not drink enough, my friend. Water taken in small quantities, serves only to disentangle the particles of the bile, and give them more activity; whereas they should be drowned in a copious dilution: don't be afraid, my child, that abundance of water will weaken and relax thy stomach; lay aside that panic fear which perhaps thou entertainest of plentiful drinking. I will warrant the consequence, and if thou dost not look upon me as a sufficient bondsman, Celsus himself shall be thy security. That Roman oracle bestows an admirable eulogium on water, and afterwards says in express terms, that those who excuse their drinking of wine, on account of a weak stomach, do a manifest injury to that organ, by using such a cloak for their own sensuality.'

As it would not have looked well for me to show myself intractable in the very beginning of my career in physic, I seemed persuaded of his being in the right, and will even own I was effectually convinced; so that I continued to drink water on the guaranty of Celsus, or rather to drown my bile in copious draughts of that liquor; and although I felt myself everyday more and more incommoded by it, prejudice got the better of experience; so happily was I disposed by nature for becoming a physician. I could not always, however, resist the violence of my disorder, which increased to such a degree, that I resolved at length to leave Doctor Sangrado; but he invested me with a new employment which made me change that resolution. 'Hark'ee, my child (said he one day), I am not one of those harsh and ungrateful masters who let their domestics grow grey in their service, before they recompense them. I am well pleased with thy behaviour, I have a regard for thee, and without further delay will make thy fortune. I will immediately disclose to thee the whole extent

of that salutary art which I have professed so many years. Other physicians make this consist in the knowledge of a thousand difficult sciences; but I intend to go a shorter way to work, and spare thee the trouble of studying pharmacy, anatomy, botany, and physic: know, my friend, all that is acquired is to bleed thy patients and make them drink warm water. This is the secret of curing all the distempers incident to man. Yes! that wonderful secret which I reveal to thee, and which nature, impenetrable to my brethren, hath not been able to hide from my researches, is contained in these two points of plentiful bleeding and frequent draughts of water. I have nothing more to impart; thou knowest physic to the very bottom, and reaping the fruit of my long experience, art becoming in a twinkling as skilful as I am. Thou mayst (continued he) ease me not a little, at present: in the morning, thou shalt keep our register, and in the afternoon, go and visit a part of my patients: while I take care of the nobility and clergy, thou shalt go in my room to the houses of tradesmen, where I am called; and when thou shalt have practised some time, I will procure thy admission into the faculty. Thou art learned, Gil Blas, before thou turnest physician, whereas others prescribe a long time, generally all their lives, without ever becoming learned.'

I thanked the doctor for having enabled me with such dispatch to serve as his deputy; and as an acknowledgement of his favours, assured him, that I would follow his maxims as long as I lived, even if they should be contrary to those of Hippocrates. But this assurance was not altogether sincere; for I disapproved of his opinion with regard to water, and resolved to drink wine everyday, when I went out to visit my patients. I committed my own clothes to a peg for the second time, and put on a suit of my master's, that I might appear in all respects like a physician: after which, I prepared myself for exercising medicine at the expense of whom it should con-

cern. My *coup d'essai* being upon an alguazil who was ill of a pleurisy, I ordered him to be blooded without mercy, and filled to the tongue with water: I went afterwards into the house of a pastry-cook who lay roaring with the gout, and whose blood I was no more sparing of than the alguazil's; taking care also not to restrict him in the article of water. For these prescriptions, I received twelve reals, which made me so enamoured of the profession, that I thought 'the more mischief the better sport.' Coming out of the pastry-cook's house, I met Fabricio, whom I had not seen since the death of the Licentiate Sedillo; and who having looked at me some minutes with surprise, set his hands in his sides, and burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter. It was not without reason; for, having a cloak that trailed on the ground, with a doublet and breeches that would have served a man four times as big as me, my figure was truly original. I let him laugh till he was tired, not without being tempted to follow his example; but I constrained myself in order to preserve decorum, and the better ape the physician, who is no risible animal. If my ludicrous appearance had excited the mirth of Fabricio, my gravity increased it; and when he had indulged it sufficiently, 'Upon my conscience, Gil Blas (said he), thou art pleasantly equipped. Who the devil has disguised thee in this manner?' 'Softly, friend (replied I), softly. Learn to show more respect for another Hippocrates; and know, that I am the deputy of Doctor Sangrado, the most celebrated physician of Valladolid, with whom I have lived these three weeks. He has taught me physic to the very bottom, and as he cannot, in person, attend all the sick who send for him, I assist him in his visitation: he takes care of the great, and I of the plebeians.' 'Very well (replied Fabricio), he leaves the blood of the commonalty to thee, while he reserves that of the gentry to himself: I congratulate thee upon thy share; for it is better to have to do with the populace, than with persons of fashion; happy is a physician in the suburbs! his faults are less observed, and his

assassinations less known. Yes, my child, added he, thy situation is to be envied, and to speak in the words of Alexander, if I was not Fabricio, I could wish to be Gil Blas.'

To show the son of Barber Nuñez, that he had reason to praise the happiness of my present condition, I produced the reals which I had received from the alguazil, and pastry-cook; upon which, we went into a public-house in order to spend some of them: here we were served with pretty good wine, which the longing desire I had of tasting that liquor, making me think still better than it was, I drank huge draughts of it, and (no disparagement to the Roman oracle) the more I filled my stomach, the less did that organ complain of the injury it received. Fabricio and I having stayed together a long time, in the public-house, and laughed heartily at the expense of our masters, as the custom is among servants, we parted in the twilight, after having made a mutual promise of meeting again in the same place, next day in the afternoon.

CHAPTER IV

Gil Blas continues to act the physician with equal capacity and success. The adventure of the ring retrieved

I HAD just got home, when Doctor Sangrado came in, to whom I gave an account of the patients I had visited, and put into his hand eight reals which remained of the twelve I had received for my prescriptions. 'Eight reals! (said he, after having counted them), this is a small matter for two visits; but we must refuse nothing.' So it appeared: for he kept six, and giving me two, 'Hold, Gil Blas (added he), there is something for thee to begin stock: I allow thee a fourth part of what thou shalt get, and thou wilt be rich in a very short time (my friend), for, please God, there will be plenty of diseases this season.'

I had reason to be contented with my share; because,

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resolving to detain always, a fourth part of what I should receive from the patients, and afterwards, touching a fourth of what should remain, it would on the whole (if there be any truth in arithmetic) amount to one half of what I should earn. This consideration inspiring me with new ardour for my profession, next day when I had dined, I resumed my physician's dress, and going out, visited several patients whom I had registered, and whom I treated after the same manner, though their distempers were quite different. Hitherto, things had gone smoothly on, and nobody (thank heaven) found fault with my prescriptions; but howsoever excellent the practice of physic may be, it cannot scape censure: going into the house of a grocer whose son was dropsical, I there met with a little swarthy physician called Doctor Cuchillo[1], whom a relation of the grocer's had brought along with him: I made profound bows to everybody present, and in particular to the person who (I concluded) was called to consult with me about the distemper of the patient; he saluted me with great gravity, then eyeing me attentively for some minutes, 'Señor Doctor (said he), pray excuse my curiosity; I thought I had been acquainted with all my brethren the physicians of Valladolid: but I confess, your features are utterly unknown to me: sure you must not have been long settled in this city.' I answered that I was a young practitioner, who as yet only prescribed under the auspices of Doctor Sangrado. 'I congratulate you (said he, bowing) on your having embraced the method of such a great man; and I do not doubt that you are already master of your business, notwithstanding your youthful appearance.' He spoke this so naturally, that I did not know whether he was in jest or earnest, and I was thinking upon some answer, when the grocer interposing, said, 'Gentlemen, I am persuaded that you are both per-

[1] *Cuchillo*=knife: a caricature of Jean Baptiste Procope-Couteaux, author of *Quaestio medica, an aër pulmones penetrat* (Paris, 1704), and other medical treatises.

fectly well acquainted with the art of physic, therefore, pray examine the situation of my son, and prescribe what you shall judge proper for his cure.'

Accordingly, the little doctor inquired into the state of our patient, and after having made me observe all the symptoms of the disease, asked in what manner I proposed to treat him. 'I am of opinion (said I), that he should be blooded everyday, and drink hot water in abundance' At these words, the little physician said with a satirical grin, 'And do you think these remedies will save his life?' 'Never doubt that (cried I, in a resolute tone) they must certainly produce that effect, being (as Doctor Sangrado observes) specifics against all kinds of distemper.' 'At that rate (replied he), Celsus is very much to blame, in assuring us, that for the more easy cure of a dropsy, it is requisite to make the patient suffer both hunger and thirst.' 'Oh! Celsus (I resumed) is not my oracle: he was as liable to mistakes as any other; and I have sometimes found my account in acting quite contrary to his opinion.' 'I perceive by your discourse (said Cuchillo), the sure and satisfactory method that Doctor Sangrado would insinuate into young practitioners: the whole of his practice consists in bleeding and aqueous draughts; therefore, I am not at all surprised to see so many honest people die under his hands.' 'None of your invectives (said I, interrupting him with some heat), it does not look well to hear a man of your profession cast such reflections. Come, come, Señor Doctor, abundance of sick people are sent to the other world, without being blooded, or drinking hot water; and I don't doubt that you have dismissed your share of them: if you have anything to say against Doctor Sangrado, commit it to paper; he will answer it, and we shall soon see on which side the laughers are.' 'By Santiago and St. Denis! (cried he, in a rage) you are little acquainted with Doctor Cuchillo! Know, friend. that I have both teeth and nails, and am not at all afraid of Sangrado, who in spite of his vanity and presumption, is a downright ninny.' The appearance of

the little doctor making me despise his wrath, I replied with great bitterness; he answered in the same manner, and we came to fisticuffs in a very short time: some blows passed, and each of us lost a handful of hair, before the grocer and his kinsman could part us; which when they had accomplished, I was paid for my visit and dismissed, while they retained my antagonist, who seemed to them the more skilful of the two.

After this adventure, I had like to have met with another as bad: for going to visit a fat chanter who was ill of a fever, I no sooner mentioned hot water, than he fell into a rage against the specific, cursed and swore, called me a thousand names, and even threatened to throw me out of the window. I moved off faster than I came in, and not choosing to see any more patients that day, betook myself to the house appointed for the rendezvous between me and Fabricio, who was already there: and as we found ourselves in a frolicsome humour, we drank hard, and went home in a state of elevation—that is, half seas over.

Señor Sangrado did not observe that I was drunk, because he mistook my extravagant gestures in recounting the quarrel I had with the little doctor, for an effect of the emotion occasioned by the battle: besides, having been principally concerned in our dispute, he became a party, and piqued at Cuchillo, said, 'Thou hast done well, Gil Blas, in defending the honour of our remedies against that little abortion of the faculty. He affirms, then, that aqueous draughts are improper for the dropsy! Ignorant wretch! I maintain—I do—that a dropsical patient cannot drink too much. Yes, water (added he) can cure all kinds of dropsies, as well as rheumatisms, and the green-sickness: it is moreover excellent in fevers where the patient burns and shivers at the same time; and of incredible effect even in those distempers that are imputed to cold, serous and phlegmatic humours: this opinion may appear strange to such raw physicians as Cuchillo; but it is easily supported by theory and practice; and if such as he were capable

of reasoning philosophically, instead of decrying my method, they would become my most zealous partisans.'

He did not therefore suspect my being fuddled, so much was he enraged; for, in order to inflame him the more against the little doctor, I had thrown into my story some circumstances of my own invention. Nevertheless, fired as he was with what I had told him, he perceived that I drank more water that evening than usual, the wine having made me very thirsty. Any other than Sangrado would have suspected my extraordinary drought, and the great draughts I swallowed; but he firmly believed that I began to relish watery potions; and said, with a smile, 'I see, Gil Blas, thou hast no longer an aversion to water. Heaven be praised, thou drinkest it now like nectar. A change that does not surprise me at all, my friend; for I knew that it would soon grow familiar to thy taste.' 'Sir (I replied), there's a time for all things: I would not at present give a pint of water for an hogshead of wine.' The doctor, charmed with this answer, did not neglect such a fair opportunity of extolling the excellence of water: but uttered a new eulogium on it, not like a cold advocate; but with all the fervour of an enthusiast. 'A thousand times (cried he), a thousand and ten thousand times more valuable and innocent than the taverns of our days, were those baths of ages past, into which people did not go to prostitute in a shameful manner their lives and fortunes by glutting themselves with wine: but where people met for amusement, and drank hot water with honour and security! One cannot enough admire the wise provision of those masters of civil life, who established public places where water was freely given to all comers, and who secured the wine in the shops of apothecaries, permitting it to be used by the prescription of physicians only. What surprising sagacity! It is, doubtless (added he) owing to some lucky remains of that ancient frugality, worthy of the golden age, that there are still a few who, like thou and I, drink nothing but water; and who, as a preservative from,

or cure of all distempers, trust to hot water unboiled: for I have observed that boiled water is more heavy, and less agreeable to the stomach.'

While he uttered this eloquent harangue, I had like to have laughed in his face more than once: I kept my gravity however,—I did more. I entered into the doctor's sentiments, inveighed against the use of wine, and lamented that mankind had contracted a taste for such a pernicious liquor. Then (as my thirst was not sufficiently quenched), I filled a large goblet with water, and having swallowed long draughts of it, 'Come, sir (said I to my master), let us regale ourselves with this benevolent liquor, and revive in your house those ancient baths which you regret so much.' He applauded my zeal, and during a whole quarter of an hour, exhorted me to drink nothing but water. In order to familiarize myself to this prescription, I promised to swallow a great quantity every evening; and that I might the more easily perform my promise, went to bed with a resolution of going to the tavern everyday.

The opposition I met with at the grocer's house, did not deter me from prescribing warm water and bleeding next day. As I came out of a house where I had been to visit a frantic poet, I met an old woman in the street, who accosting me, asked if I was a physician; when I answered in the affirmative, 'Well then (said she) I most humbly beg you will come along with me; my niece was yesterday taken ill, and I don't know what is the matter with her.' I followed the old gentlewoman, who conducted me to a house, and introduced me to a pretty neat chamber, where I found a person in bed, and going towards her, in order to inquire into the symptoms of her disease, was immediately struck with her features, which when I had observed some minutes, I recollected her to be no other than the female adventurer who had so dexterously acted the part of Camilla. As for her part, she did not seem to remember me; whether the oppression of her own distemper, or my physician's

garb, secured me from her recollection. Laying hold of her arm, in order to feel the pulse, I perceived my ring upon her finger; at sight of which, I felt a terrible emotion, and a violent desire of attempting to retrieve it; but considering that the women might fall a-crying, and Don Raphael, or some other champion of the fair sex, come to their assistance, I was at pains to resist the temptation: and imagining it would be better to dissemble, and take the advice of Fabricio, stuck to this last resolution. In the meantime, the old woman pressing me to let her know the nature of her niece's distemper, I was not fool enough to own myself ignorant of the matter; but on the contrary, affecting the man of skill, and copying my master's deportment, I told her with great gravity, that the distemper proceeded from the patient's want of perspiration, and that of consequence, she must be speedily blooded, that evacuation being the only substitute of perspiration: I likewise prescribed warm water, that the rules of our practice might be exactly observed.

Having made my visit as short as possible, I ran to find the son of Nuñez, whom I met at the door, going out to execute a commission for his master: I told him my new adventure, asking if he thought I should cause Camilla to be arrested in course of law; he answered, 'Not at all. That is not the way to see thy ring again; for the officers of justice hate to make restitution. Remember the jail of Astorga, where thy horse, money, and even thy clothes were detained by these harpies. We must rather make use of our own industry, in recovering thy jewel; I'll undertake to find out some stratagem for that purpose; and will think of it, in my way to the hospital, where I carry a short message to the steward from my master: go and wait for me at our tavern, and be not impatient, for I will be with thee in a very little time.'

He did not, however, arrive at the rendezvous till after I had been there three hours; and then so disguised, that at first I did not know him: for he changed his dress, twisted his hair into a queue, covered one

half of his face with a pair of artificial whiskers, provided himself with a huge sword, the hilt of which was at least three feet in circumference; and marched at the head of five men who looked as fierce as himself, and wore also long rapiers and thick moustachios. 'Your servant, Señor Gil Blas (said he, accosting me), you see in me an alguazil of a new stamp, and in these brave fellows who accompany me, soldiers of the same model. Show us only the house of the woman who stole your diamond, and be assured, that we will make her restore it in a twinkling.' I embraced Fabricio at this discourse, which explained the stratagem he intended to put in practice in my behalf; and assured him, that I very much approved of his expedient. I saluted also the false soldiers, who were three valets, and two journeymen barbers of his acquaintance, whom he had engaged to act this part. Having treated the whole brigade with wine, we went altogether, in the twilight, to Camilla's lodgings, and knocked at the door, which the old woman opening, and taking my attendants for the terriers of justice, who never entered that house without cause, was seized with consternation. 'Courage, good mother (said Fabricio to her), we are come hither only on account of a small affair that will soon be determined.' So saying, we advanced to the chamber of the sick person, conducted by the old woman, who walked before, lighting us with a wax taper in a silver candlestick. Taking the candle in my hand, I went towards the bed, and discovering my face to Camilla, 'Perfidious woman! (said I) behold the too credulous Gil Blas, whom you have tricked. Ah wretch! I have found you at last, and the corregidor, in consequence of my information, has ordered this alguazil to apprehend you. Come, Mr. Tipstaff (said I to Fabricio), do your office.' 'There is no occasion (answered he, raising his voice) for exhorting me to do my duty. I remember that there creature, who has been a long time marked in my memorandum-book, with red letters. Rise, my princess (added he), dress yourself with all dispatch. I

intend to be your usher, and conduct you to the city-jail, if you think well of it.'

At these words, Camilla, sick as she was, perceiving that two of his followers with the great whiskers were about to drag her out by force, sat up in her bed, clasped her hands in a suppliant posture, and looking at me with terror in her eyes, 'Señor Gil Blas (said she), I conjure you by the chaste mother who bore you, to have pity upon me! though I am very guilty, I am still more unfortunate! don't ruin me; I will restore your ring.' So saying, she took it off from her finger, and put it into my hand. But I told her, my diamond alone would not suffice, and that she must besides make restitution of the thousand ducats which had been stole from me in the furnished lodgings. 'Oh Señor! (she replied) do not ask your ducats of me; the traitor, Don Raphael, whom I have not seen since that time, carried them off the same night.' 'Oho, my little darling (said Fabricio to her), you think to get out of the scrape by denying you had any share of the booty; but you shan't be so easily quit, I assure you: your being an accomplice of Don Raphael is a sufficient reason for obliging you to give an account of your past life. You have, doubtless, a great many things on your conscience; and therefore you shall go to prison (if you please), and make a general confession. I will carry this old gentlewoman thither also (added he); for I imagine she knows a great many curious stories which the corregidor will not be sorry to hear.'

At these words, the two women put everything in practice to melt us; filling the chamber with cries, groans, and lamentations: while the old woman on her knees, sometimes before the alguazil, and sometimes before his attendants, endeavoured to move their compassion; Camilla implored me in the most affecting manner to save her from the hands of justice. Upon which, I pretended to relent, saying to the son of Nuñez, 'Mr. Officer, since I have got my diamond, I am satisfied. I don't desire to give this poor woman

any further trouble: and would not even seek the death of a sinner.' 'For shame! (said he) a man of your humanity would make a bad trooper: but I must acquit myself of my commission, by which I am expressly ordered to apprehend these infantas: for the corregidor wants to make an example of them.' 'For heaven's sake! (I replied) have some regard to entreaty, and abate a little of your severity, in consideration of the present which these ladies will offer.' 'Oh! that's another affair (said he), that is what we call a figure of rhetoric well placed. Come, let us see what they have got to give me?' 'I have (said Camilla) a pearl-necklace, and ear-rings of a considerable value.' Here she was interrupted with, 'Yes, but if they come from the Philippine Isles, I'll have none of them.' 'You may take them, upon my word, I'll warrant them genuine' (said she), at the same time desiring the old woman to bring a little box, out of which she took the necklace and ear-rings, and put them into the alguazil's hand. Though he knew no more of jewels than I did, he was persuaded that the diamonds of the ear-rings were genuine, as well as the pearls of the necklace; therefore, having examined them attentively, 'These jewels (said he) seem to be of a good water, and provided the silver candlestick, which Señor Gil Blas has in his hand, be added to them, I won't answer for my fidelity.' 'I don't believe (said I to Camilla) that you will for a trifle, break off a treaty so much to your advantage.' So saying, I gave the light to the old woman, and the candlestick to Fabricio, who being satisfied with what he had got, because (perhaps) he saw nothing else in the room which he could easily carry off, said to the ladies, 'Adieu, my princesses, live in peace. I will speak to the corregidor, and represent you whiter than snow: for such as we can give what turn we please to things, and never tell him the plain truth, except when we are under no temptation to lie.'

CHAPTER V

The sequel of the ring retrieved. Gil Blas quits the profession of physic, and makes his retreat from Valladolid

After having in this manner executed the scheme of Fabricio, we left Camilla's lodgings, congratulating ourselves upon a piece of success that even surpassed our expectation; for we had laid our account with recovering the ring only. However, we carried off the rest without ceremony; and, far from making a scruple of robbing courtesans, we thought we had done a meritorious action. 'Gentlemen (said Fabricio, when we had got into the street), it is my opinion that we should go back to the tavern, and spend the night in making merry. To-morrow we will sell the candlestick, necklace, and ear-rings, and share the money like brothers; after which we will return to our several homes, and make the best excuse we can to our masters.' This proposal of the alguazil seeming very reasonable to us all, we returned to the tavern; some of us believing we could easily find an excuse for having laid abroad, and others not caring whether they should be dismissed or no.

We ordered a good supper, and sat down to table with as much appetite as good humour. The repast was seasoned with a thousand agreeable sallies; and Fabricio, in particular, enlivened the conversation, and diverted us all extremely, by innumerable strokes replete with Castilian salt, which is equal at least to the ancient Attic. But while we were in this jovial disposition, our mirth was all of a sudden overcast by an unforeseen accident. A man of a pretty good mien entered the room where we were at supper, followed by two others of terrible aspect; after these three more appeared; and we counted no less than twelve

who came in thus, three by three, armed with carbines, swords, and bayonets. We soon perceived them to be the soldiers of the patrol, and it was not difficult to guess their intention; wherefore we had some thoughts, at first, of making resistance; but they surrounded us in an instant, and kept us in awe, as well by their numbers as their firearms. 'Gentlemen (said their commander to us with a sneer), I know by what ingenious artifice you have recovered a ring from the hands of a certain she-adventurer; and, to be sure, the contrivance is excellent, and richly deserves a public recompense, which you shall by no means miss. Justice has already appointed an apartment for you in her own house, and will not fail to reward such a masterly attempt.' This discourse very much disconcerted all those to whom it was addressed: our countenances changed, and we felt, in our turn, the same fear with which we had inspired Camilla. Fabricio, however, though pale and dismayed, endeavoured to justify what we had done. 'Sir (said he), as we had no bad intention, this little trick might be forgiven.' 'How the devil! (cried the commandant in a rage) do you call this a little trick? Don't you know that it is a hanging matter? For, besides that no man is allowed to do justice to himself without the cognizance of the law, you have carried off a candlestick, necklace, and ear-rings that did not belong to you; and which is still worse, in order to commit that robbery, you have disguised yourselves like tipstaves. Wretches! to dress yourselves in the habit of such honourable people to do mischief! I shall think you very lucky, if you are only sentenced to the galleys.' When he had convinced us that the affair was much more serious than we at first imagined, we fell down together at his feet, and begged he would have pity on our youth. But our prayers were unregarded; and besides, he rejected a proposal we made of quitting to him the necklace, ear-rings, and candlestick: even my ring was refused, because (I suppose) it was offered before too much company. In short,

he was quite inexorable; ordered my companions to be disarmed, and carried us all together to the public jail. In our way thither one of the guard told me, that the old woman who lived with Camilla, suspecting that we were not the real footpads of justice, had followed us to the tavern; and there being confirmed in her opinion, had revenged herself upon us, by informing the patrol of the whole affair.

We were immediately plundered of everything; the necklace, diamonds, and candlestick seized; as also my ring, together with the ruby of the Philippine Isles, which I had unfortunately in my pocket. They did not even spare the reals, which I had that day received for my prescriptions; which was a sure sign to me, that the people belonging to justice at Valladolid are as expert in their office as those at Astorga, and that the manners of all these gentlemen are everywhere alike. While I was rifled of my jewels and cash, the officer of the patrol recounted our adventure to these agents of the plunder; and the affair seemed to them of such a serious nature, that the majority thought we deserved a halter: but others, less severe, imagined we might get off for two hundred lashes each, and a few years' service in the galleys. Until the corregidor should think proper to decide our affair, we were locked up in a dungeon, where we lay upon straw, with which it was strewed like a stable littered for horses. Here we might have remained long enough, and at last exchanged our habitation for the galleys, had not Señor Manuel Ordoñez next day heard of our misfortune, and resolved to procure the liberty of Fabricio, which he could not do without obtaining also the dismission of us all. Being a man very much esteemed in the city, he did not spare solicitations; and partly by his own credit, and partly by that of his friends, at the end of three days effected our enlargement. But we did not come out as we had gone in; the candlestick, necklace, and ear-rings, my ring, ruby, and reals being detained: which made me

remember those verses of Virgil, that begin with *Sic vos non vobis*[1].

As soon as we were set at liberty we returned to our masters; and Doctor Sangrado received me very kindly, saying, 'My poor Gil Blas, I did not hear of thy misfortune till this morning, and was just going to make strong solicitations in thy behalf. Thou must console thyself, my friend, for this accident, and attach thyself more than ever to physic.' 'That is my design' (said I). And truly I thought of nothing else. Far from wanting business, it happened, as my master had foretold, that distempers were very rife, the small-pox and putrid fever beginning to ravage the city and suburbs; so that all the physicians in Valladolid, and we in particular, had abundance of practice. Scarce a day passed in which we did not visit eight or ten patients each; from whence it may be easily conceived what a quantity of blood was spilt, and water drank. But, I do not know how it happened, all our sick died, either on account of our malpractice, or because their diseases were incurable. Certain it is, we very seldom had occasion to make three visits to one patient: at the second, we were either told that he was just going to be buried, or found him at the last gasp; and as I was but a young physician, who had not yet time to be inured to murder, I began to be very uneasy at the fatal events

[1] The story is that Bathyllus claimed credit for an anonymous couplet written by Virgil on the palace gate after Actium:

> Nocte pluit tota, redeunt spectacula mane;
> Divisum imperium cum Jove Caesar habet.

Virgil replied by writing 'Sic vos non vobis' four times, and finally completed the lines as follows:

> Hos ego versiculos feci, tulit alter honores.
> Sic vos non vobis nidificatis aves,
> Sic vos non vobis vellera fertis oves,
> Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes,
> Sic vos non vobis fertis aratra boves.

which might be laid to my charge. 'Sir (said I, one evening, to Doctor Sangrado), I take heaven to witness, that I follow your method with the utmost exactness; yet nevertheless, every one of my patients leaves me in the lurch. It looks as if they took a pleasure in dying, merely to bring our practice into discredit. This very day I met two of them going to their long home.' 'Why truly, child (answered he), I have reason to make pretty much the same observation: I have not often the satisfaction of curing those who fall into my hands; and if I was not so sure as I am of the principles on which I proceed, I should think my remedies were pernicious in almost all the cases that come under my care.' 'If you will take my advice, sir (said I), we will change our method, and give chemical preparations to our patients, through curiosity; the worst that can happen will only be, that they produce the same effect that follows our bleedings and warm water.' 'I would willingly make that experiment (he replied), provided it could have no bad consequences; but I have published a book, in which I have extolled the use of frequent bleeding and aqueous draughts; and wouldst thou have me go and decry my own work?' 'Oh! you are certainly in the right (said I), you must not give your enemies such a triumph over you: they would say, you are at last disabused: and therefore ruin your reputation: perish rather the nobility, clergy and people! and let us continue in our old path. After all, our brother doctors, notwithstanding their aversion for bleeding, perform as few miracles as we do; and I believe their drugs are no better than our specifics.'

We went to work, therefore, afresh, and proceeded in such a manner, that in less than six weeks, we made more widows and orphans than the siege of Troy. By the number of burials, one would have thought that the plague was in Valladolid; and everyday, some father came to our house, to demand an account of his son, whom we had ravished from

him, or some uncle, to upbraid us with his nephew's death. As for the sons and nephews, whose fathers and uncles we had dispatched, they never appeared to complain: the husbands too were very civil, and never cavilled with us about the loss of their wives. But those afflicted people, whose reproaches we were obliged to undergo, were, sometimes, very brutal in their grief, and called us ignorant assassins. As they did not spare me, in particular, I was afflicted by their epithets: but my master, who was used to such accidents, heard them without the least emotion. I might, perhaps, in time, have been accustomed to reproach, as well as he, if heaven, doubtless, to rid the sick people in Valladolid of one of their most severe scourges, had not produced an occasion that gave me a disgust to physic, which I practised with so little success.

There was in our neighbourhood a tennis-court, to which the idle people in the town daily resorted, and, among the rest, one of your professed bullies, who take upon themselves the office of arbiters, and decide all differences that happen. He was from Biscay, his name Don Rodrigo de Mondragon, about thirty years of age, of an ordinary make, but lean and muscular; he had two little twinkling eyes, that rolled in his head, and threatened everybody he looked at; a very flat nose, placed between red whiskers, that curled up to his very temples, and a manner of speaking so rough and passionate, that his words struck terror into everybody. This racket-breaker had made himself tyrant of the tennis-court, where he judged all the disputes that happened among those who played, in the most imperious manner, and no man durst appeal from his decision, unless he could resolve to fight him next day. Such as I have described Don Rodrigo, who, notwithstanding the Don he had prefixed to his name, was an arrant rascal, he captivated the mistress of the tennis-court, who was a woman about forty years of age, rich and agreeable enough, and in the fifteenth month of her widowhood. I know not how he

won her heart; for, doubtless, it was not by his beauty; but surely, by that *je ne sais quoi* which cannot be expressed. Be that as it will, she had a passion for him, and actually designed to take him for her husband; but while preparations were making for the consummation of that affair, she fell sick, and unhappily employed me as her physician. If her distemper had not been a malignant fever, my prescriptions were sufficient to endanger her life; so that, in four days, I filled the tennis-court with mourning; the mistress went the way of all my patients, and her relations took possession of her estate. Don Rodrigo, made desperate by the loss of his mistress, or rather by being balked in his expectation of a very advantageous match, not only cursed and reviled me, but also swore that he would run me through the body, whenever he could catch me, and exterminate me from the face of the earth. A charitable neighbour informed me of this oath, and advised me not to stir abroad, for fear of meeting this devil of a man. This advice, which I had no intention to neglect, filled me with confusion and dismay: I fancied incessantly that I saw this furious Biscayan coming into the house; and could not enjoy one moment's repose. This effectually detached me from physic, and my sole care was how to free myself from disquiet: I resumed my embroidered suit, and after having bid adieu to my master, who could not persuade me to stay, quitted the city at daybreak, not without apprehension of meeting Don Rodrigo in my way.

CHAPTER VI

Of his route when he left Valladolid; and the person he joined on the road

I WALKED very fast, looking behind me from time to time, to see if this formidable Biscayan was not at my heels; my imagination being so much possessed by

that fellow, that I took every tree or bush I saw for him; and every moment felt my heart throb with fear. I plucked up my courage, however, when I had gone a good league, and continued, at an easier pace, my journey towards Madrid, whither my purpose was to go. I should have quitted Valladolid without regret, had I not been sorry to part from Fabricio, my dear Pylades, to whom I could not so much as bid adieu: but it gave me no mortification to renounce physic; on the contrary, I begged pardon of God for having exercised it at all; though I did not fail to count, with pleasure, the money I had in my purse, notwithstanding its being the salary of my assassinations: in that respect, resembling those ladies of pleasure, who reform their morals, but, nevertheless, keep fast hold of the wages of sin. My whole fortune amounted to pretty near the value of five ducats, in reals; on the strength of which I expected to reach Madrid, where I did not doubt of finding some good place: besides, I longed passionately to see that august city, which had been extolled to me as the epitome of all the wonders of the world.

While I recollected all that I had heard in its praise, and enjoyed its pleasures by anticipation, I heard the voice of a man behind me, singing at full stretch: he had a leathern wallet on his back, a guitar hanging about his neck, a long sword by his side, and walked so fast, that he was up with me in a very short time. Being one of the two journeymen barbers with whom I had been imprisoned in the adventure of the ring, we knew one another immediately, though our dress was altered, and were very much surprised at meeting so unexpectedly on the highway. I assured him that I was extremely glad to have him for a fellow-traveller, and his joy seemed no less at meeting with me. I told him my reason for quitting Valladolid; and he reposed the same confidence in me, by letting me know, that he had quarrelled with his master, and bid him an eternal adieu. 'If I had been inclined (added he) to live any longer in Valladolid, I could have found

employment in abundance of shops; for, without vanity, I can handle a razor, and curl a moustache, as well as e'er a barber in Spain: but I could no longer resist the violent desire I had to visit the place of my nativity, from which I have been absent these ten years: I want to breathe my own country air a little, and know the situation of my family, with whom I hope to be in two days; for they live at a place called Olmedo, a market-town on this side of Segovia.'

Resolving to accompany this barber to his own home, and from thence go to Segovia, in order to take the opportunity of some conveyance to Madrid, we pursued our journey, and discoursed of indifferent subjects. He was a young fellow of some wit and humour; and when we had conversed together an hour, he asked how my stomach was disposed: I answered, that he should see at the first inn. Upon which he said, 'We had better make a pause in the meantime: I have something for breakfast, in my wallet; for when I travel, I always take care to have provision along with me: I don't trouble myself with clothes, linen, and other useless baggage; but resolving to have nothing superfluous, fill my knapsack with belly-timber, my razor, and a wash-ball.' I commended his prudence, and consented, with all my heart, to the pause he proposed; for I was hungry, and resolved to make a good meal, which I could not but expect, after what he had told me. We turned a little out of the highway, in order to sit upon the grass, where my friend the barber took out his victuals, consisting of five or six onions, with a few crusts of bread and cheese; but what he produced as the best furniture of his budget, was a little bottle full (as he said) of delicate wine. Though our dishes were not very savoury, hunger, being very urgent with us both, made them relish pretty well; and we emptied the bottle, which contained about two pints, of a sort of wine that I don't choose to boast much of: after which, we got up, and continued our journey with

great good humour. The barber, who had been informed by Fabricio that I had met with some very particular adventures, desired to hear them from my own mouth; a satisfaction I could not refuse to a man who had regaled me so sumptuously. When I had gratified his curiosity, I told him he could do no less, in return for my complaisance, than recount the story of his own life. 'Oh! as for my story (cried he), it is not worth hearing, as it contains nothing but ordinary facts: nevertheless (added he), since we have nothing else to do, you shall hear it, such as it is.' So saying, he related it, nearly in these words.

CHAPTER VII

The story of the journeyman barber[1]

Fernan Perez de la Fuente, my grandfather (I go to the fountain-head), after having been fifty years barber in the village of Olmedo, died, and left four sons, the eldest of whom took possession of his shop, and succeeded him in the business; Bertrand, the second, having an inclination for trade, became a mercer; Thomas, who was the third, kept a school; and the fourth, whose name was Pedro, feeling himself born for *belles lettres*, sold a little lot of ground, which he had for his patrimony, and went to live at Madrid, where he hoped, one day, to distinguish himself by his wit and learning; while his three brothers did not separate, but settling at Olmedo, married the daughters of husbandmen, who, in lieu of fortune, brought them abundance of children, breeding as if it had been for a wager. My mother, the barber's wife, brought six into the world, for her share, in the first five years of her marriage, of which number I am one. My father taught me betimes to shave, and when I arrived at the age of fifteen, put this wallet upon my shoulders,

[1] The barber's story is mainly taken from *Marcos de Obregon*, Relacion I, Descansos ii, iii.

and girding me with a long sword, said. 'Go, Diego, thou art now in a condition to gain a livelihood: go and see the world; thou hast occasion for a little travelling, to rub thee up, and make thee perfect in thy business. March, and don't return to Olmedo, before thou hast made a tour of Spain. Let me not hear from thee until this be performed.' At these words, he embraced me very affectionately, and turned me out of doors.

Such was the behaviour of my father at parting with me. But my mother, whose manners were not quite so rough, seemed more affected on this occasion: she let fall some tears, and even slipped a ducat privately into my hand. So I quitted Olmedo, and took the road to Segovia; of which, however, I had not walked above two hundred paces, when I stopped to examine my knapsack, being desirous of seeing what it contained, and of knowing precisely the extent of my possession. I found a case and two razors, so much wore, that they seemed to have shaved ten generations, with a thong of leather to set them, and a lump of soap: besides, there was a canvas shirt quite new, an old pair of my father's shoes, and, what gave me more pleasure than all the rest, twenty reals wrapt in a linen rag. This was my whole fortune, by which you may conclude, that Master Nicolas the barber relied a good deal on my skill, since he sent me away so poorly provided. Nevertheless, the possession of a ducat and twenty reals did not fail to charm a young fellow like me, who had never before been master of coin: I believed my funds were inexhaustible, and continued my journey in a transport of joy, admiring, every moment, the hilt of my sword, which thumped against my hams, or got between my legs, at every step.

Arriving at the village of Ataquines, in the evening, very sharp set, I went to lodge at an inn, and, as if I had been a man of fortune, called for supper with an air of authority: the landlord having surveyed me some time, and seeing whom he had to do with, said,

in a very obliging manner, 'Master, you shall be satisfied; we will treat you like a prince.' So saying, he showed me into a little room; where, in a quarter of an hour, they brought me a ragout made of a ram-cat, which I ate as greedily as if it had been composed of a rabbit or hare. This excellent dish was accompanied with wine, so good, as he said, that the king himself could not drink better. Notwithstanding this eulogium, I perceived it was cursedly sour; but this did not hinder me from doing as much honour to it, as I had already done to the ragout: and, to complete the treatment of a prince, I was conducted to a couch, more proper for encouraging watchfulness than sleep; being a truckle-bed so narrow and short, that, little as I was, I had not room to lie in it with my legs extended; besides, instead of mattress and feather-bed, it had only a wretched flock-bed, covered with a doubled sheet, which had served an hundred different travellers, at least, since the last washing. Nevertheless, in such a convenience, my stomach full of ragout, and that delicious wine which the landlord had recommended, thanks to my youth and constitution, I enjoyed a sound sleep, and spent the night without indigestion.

Next day, after having breakfasted, and paid sauce for my good cheer, I made but one stage to Segovia; and, on my first arrival, had the good fortune to be employed in a shop for my board and lodging: here, however, I stayed but six months; being seduced by a brother journeyman of my acquaintance, who longed to see Madrid; and with whom I set out for that city. There I got a place on the same terms as at Segovia, in a well-accustomed shop, much frequented on account of the neighbourhood of the Church of Santa Cruz, and the Prince's Theatre[1]: my master, two journeymen and I, being scarce sufficient to trim all our customers, who consisted of people of all ranks, and, among others,

[1] The Teatro del Principe was opened on September 21, 1583. See Professor Hugo Albert Rennert, *The Life of Lope de Vega* (Glasgow, 1904), pp. 122–3.

of players and authors. One day, two persons of the last profession, being there together, began to discourse about the poetry and poets of the time, and hearing them mention the name of my uncle, I listened to their conversation with great attention. 'Don Juan de Zabaleta (said one of them) is an author, in my opinion, beneath the public notice: a cold genius, a man without fancy: his last piece has done him infinite prejudice[1].' 'And pray (said the other), has ever Luis Velez de Guevara produced a good work? was ever anything more wretched than his performances[2]?' They named a great many more poets, whom I have forgot. I remember only, that they spoke contemptuously of them all, except my uncle, of whom they made honourable mention, agreeing that he was a lad of merit. 'Yes (said one of them), Don Pedro de la Fuente is an excellent writer: his books

[1] Juan de Zabaleta is believed to have died shortly after the publication of his *Obras en prosa* (Madrid, 1667). Possibly Lesage refers to the failure of Zabaleta's play, *Aun vive la honra en los muertos.* This fiasco and the dramatist's singular ugliness are commemorated by Jeronimo de Cáncer y Velasco in an epigrammatic *redondilla:*

Al suceder la tragedia
Del silvo, si se repara,
Ver su comedia era cara,
Ver su cara era comedia.

[2] This can scarcely be taken as representing the personal opinion of Lesage, who borrowed the central idea of his *Diable boiteux* from Guevara's *Diablo cojuelo.* The chronology of the passage may perhaps be open to carping criticism, for Guevara died in 1644, the date of Zabaleta's first play, *El Hijo de Marco Aurelio.* But a certain confusion with respect to these two authors and their works seems to have existed in Spain itself many years before *Gil Blas* was written. As early as 1670, in the *Parte treinta y qvatro de Comedias nuevas, escritas por los mejores Ingenios de España,* Guevara's play, *El Embuste acreditado,* is ascribed to Zabaleta under the title of *El Disparate creido.*

contain a delicate raillery mixed with erudition, which makes them agreeably satirical; and I am not at all surprised at his being esteemed by the court and city, or at his receiving salaries from several grandees. 'He has, indeed (said the other), enjoyed a pretty large income these many years; and as he lives with the Duke of Medina Celi, and spends little, must be worth a considerable sum of money.'

I did not lose one word which the poets said concerning my uncle, who, we had heard in the family, made a noise in Madrid, by his works, some people travelling through Olmedo having told us so; but as he neglected to let us hear from him, and seemed quite detached from his relations, we, on our part, lived in as great indifference towards him. True blood is, however, always guided by a sure instinct: as soon as I heard that he was in good circumstances, and knew where he lodged, I was tempted to wait upon him: though one thing embarrassed me not a little; his being called Don Pedro by the authors. That Don gave some uneasiness, and I was afraid he might be some other poet than my uncle. I was not, however, stopped by this consideration; but imagined that he might have been ennobled on account of his wit, and therefore resolved to go and see him. For this purpose, with my master's permission, I dressed myself one morning, as well as I could, and went out of the shop, not a little proud of being nephew to a man who had acquired such reputation by his genius. As the barbers are not the least vain people in the world, I began to conceive a great opinion of myself, and, walking with a haughty air, inquired for the house of the Duke de Medina Celi, where presenting myself at the gate, and saying, I wanted to speak with Don Pedro de la Fuente, the porter pointed with his finger to a little staircase, at the farther end of a court, which he bid me ascend, and knock at the first door on my right-hand: I did so, and (a young man coming out) asked if Señor Don Pedro de la Fuente lodged there. 'Yes (said he), but you cannot see him at

present.' 'I should be very glad (I replied) to speak with him; for I bring him news of his family.' 'If you could bring him news of the Pope (said he), I would not introduce you to his chamber just now; for he is composing; and when that is the case, we must take care not to disturb his imagination: he will not be visible till noon; so that you may go and take a turn, and come back about that time.'

I took his advice, and walked through the city the whole morning, thinking continually on the reception I should meet with from my uncle, who I imagined would be extremely glad to see me: I judged of his sentiments by my own, and preparing myself for a very tender scene, returned to his lodgings, with all diligence, at the hour prescribed. 'You are come in the very nick of time (said his valet), for my master is just going out; stay here a minute, and I will let him know you are come.' So saying, he left me in an outward room, and returning in a moment, conducted me into the chamber of his master, whose face had so much of our family air in it, that I was struck with the resemblance, and could not help thinking it was my very uncle Thomas, whom I had left at home. Having saluted him with profound respect, I told him I was the son of Master Nicolas de la Fuente, barber in Olmedo; that I had worked at my father's business these three weeks at Madrid, in quality of a journeyman; and that I intended to make the tour of Spain for my improvement. While I spoke, my uncle seemed to muse, considering, in all likelihood, whether he should disown me for his nephew, or get rid of me in a more dexterous manner. He chose this last method, and affecting a smiling air, said, 'Well, my friend, how do thy father and uncles? I hope they are in good circumstances.' Upon this, I began to describe the plentiful propagation of our family; I told him the names of all the children, male and female, and even comprehended in that list their godfathers and godmothers. He did not seem to interest himself infinitely in my detail, but coming to his purpose, replied,

'Diego, I approve very much of thy resolution to travel, in order to make thee perfect in thy profession; and I advise thee to leave Madrid as soon as possible: it is a pernicious place for youth, in which thou wilt be ruined, my child: it will be more for thy advantage to reside in some of the other cities of the kingdom, where people's morals are not so much corrupted. Go (added he), and, when thou art ready to set out, come and see me again: I will give thee a pistole to help thee to make the tour of Spain.' With these words, he pushed me gently out of his chamber, and sent me about my business.

I had not sense enough to perceive that he wanted to remove me at a good distance from him; but going to our shop, gave my master an account of what had passed; he was as far from discovering the intention of Señor Don Pedro as I was, and said, 'I am not at all of your uncle's opinion: instead of advising you to travel, he ought rather, I think, make it your interest to stay in this city; for, being intimate with so many persons of quality, he can easily settle you in some great family, and put you in a condition to make your fortune.' Struck with this discourse, which flattered my imagination, in two days I went back to my uncle, and proposed that he should employ his credit to procure admission for me into the family of some lord belonging to the court. But this proposal was not at all to his liking: a vain man like him, who had free access to the great, and ate everyday at their tables, could not brook his nephew's sitting with the servants, while he dined with their lords; in this case, little Diego would have made Señor Don Pedro blush. He did not fail, therefore, to refuse my request, and that not in the most civil manner. 'How! you little vagabond (said he, with a furious look), wouldst thou quit thy profession? go, I abandon thee to those who have given thee such pernicious counsel: get out of my apartment, and never set foot in it again, otherwise I will cause thee to be chastised as thou deservest.' Confounded at these words, and still more

at the tone in which they were delivered, I retired, with the tear in my eye, very much affected at his harsh behaviour; but as I was naturally brisk and haughty, I soon dried my tears; my grief changed to indignation, and I resolved to take no further notice of this unkind relation, without whose assistance I had, hitherto, made shift to live.

My whole thought being now bent on cultivating my talent, I applied to business, shaved all day long, and in the evening learned to play on the guitar, by way of recreation. My master for that instrument was an old Señor *Escudero*[1], whose beard I trimmed, and who taught me music, which he understood perfectly well, having been formerly chorister in a cathedral. His name was Marcos de Obregon, a sage person, who had a large stock of sense, as well as experience, and loved me as well as if I had been his own child. He served in quality of usher to a physician's wife, who lived within thirty paces of our house, whither I used to go in the twilight, when we had left off working: and sitting together, on the threshold of the door, we used to make a little concert, not at all disagreeable to the neighbours: not that our voices were exquisite, but while we thrummed upon the instrument, each of us, in our turn, accompanied it with singing, and that was sufficient to please our audience. In particular, we diverted Doña Mergelina, the physician's wife[2], who used to come into the passage to hear us, and sometimes made us repeat the airs that were most to her liking; her husband not being offended at her enjoying this diversion; for though he was a Spaniard, and already well stricken in years, he was not jealous: his profession engrossed him wholly, and as he returned fatigued from his patients in the evening, he went to bed betimes, with-

[1] *Escudero*=squire. The title is borne in Espinel's story by Marcos de Obregon, whose name is given three lines lower down to one of the characters.

[2] In *Marcos de Obregon* Doña Mergelina de Aybar is the wife of Doctor Sagredo.

out being alarmed at his wife's attention to our concerts: 'tis probable, indeed, that he did not think them capable of making dangerous impressions; and we must observe, that he imagined he had little or no cause to fear; Mergelina being young and handsome, 'tis true, but withal so savagely virtuous, that she could not so much as endure the look of a man. He did not therefore begrudge her a pastime that seemed so innocent and honourable, but left us to sing as much as we pleased. One evening when I came to the physician's door, with an intention to play as usual, I found the old squire expecting me, who taking me by the hand, said he wanted to take a turn with me, before we should begin our concert; then leading me into a by-street, where he found we could talk with freedom, 'Son Diego (said he, with a melancholy air), I have something extraordinary to disclose: I am afraid, my child, that we both shall have cause to repent of amusing ourselves in the evening, with concerts at my master's door. I have, doubtless, a great friendship for you, and am very well pleased with having taught you to play upon the guitar, and sing; but had I foreseen the misfortune that threatens us, please God! I would have given you your lessons in some other place!' Frightened at this discourse, I begged the usher to be more explicit, and tell me what we had to fear; for I was not a man who could brave danger; nor had I, as yet, made the tour of Spain. 'I will (said he) tell you what is necessary to be known, that you may comprehend the jeopardy in which we are. When I entered into the service of the physician, which is about a year ago, he said to me one morning, after having brought me into the presence of his wife, "Marcos, behold your mistress: this is the lady whom you are to attend everywhere." I admired Doña Mergelina, I thought her wonderfully pretty, excessively handsome, and was particularly charmed with the agreeable air that diffused itself through her whole mien: "Sir (answered I to the physician), I am too happy in being permitted to serve

such a charming lady." Mergelina, disgusted at my answer, said in a passion, "A pretty fellow, indeed! methinks you take a great deal of liberty. I want none of your compliments—not I." Such words, from a mouth so agreeable, surprised me very much; I could not reconcile this rustic and insolent manner of speaking with the gentle appearance of my mistress: but her husband, who was used to it, rejoiced at his having a wife of such a rare character, told me that his spouse was a prodigy of virtue; and perceiving that she put on her veil, and prepared to go to mass, bade me conduct her to church. We were no sooner in the street, than we met (which is not at all extraordinary) several gentlemen, who, struck with the fine air of Doña Mergelina, paid her a great many compliments, *en passant*. She replied to them all; but you cannot imagine how silly and ridiculous her answers were. Everybody was astonished, and could not conceive that there was a woman in the world who could be displeased with praise. "Madam (said I to her), take no notice of what is said to you; it is better to keep silence, than to speak in passion." "No, no (answered she), I will let these insolent fellows know that I won't be treated with disrespect." In short, so much impertinence escaped her, that I could not help telling her my sentiments, at the hazard of her displeasure. I represented to her, as delicately as I could, that she perverted nature, and spoiled a thousand good qualities by her savage humour; that a woman of politeness and good nature might inspire love without the help of beauty; whereas, the handsomest person in the world, without meekness and good breeding, would become the object of contempt. I strengthened these arguments with many more of the same kind, calculated for the reformation of her behaviour; and after having moralized a good deal, I was afraid that my freedom would enrage my mistress, and bring upon me some severe repartee: nevertheless, she did not rebel against my remonstrance, but contented herself with neglecting it

entirely, as well as all the rest that I was afterwards foolish enough to make.

'At length I forbore to advertise her of her faults, and abandoned her to the ferocity of her nature. Meanwhile (would you believe it?) this ferocious disposition, this haughty woman, is, within these two months, entirely changed; she is complaisant to everybody, and her behaviour most agreeable; she is not the same Mergelina who made such silly answers to the men that said obliging things to her; she is become sensible to praise; loves to be called handsome, and told that a man cannot look upon her with impunity; and flattery is now as agreeable to her as to any other woman; the change is scarce credible: and, what will surprise you still more, you are the author of such a great miracle! Yes, my dear Diego (continued the usher), you have metamorphosed Doña Mergelina in this manner, and converted that tigress into a lamb. In one word, you have attracted her notice: I have perceived it more than once, and I am very much mistaken in the sex, if she has not conceived a most violent passion for you. This, my child, is the sad piece of news I had to disclose, and the troublesome dilemma in which we are.'

'I can't see (said I to the old man) that we have so much cause to be afflicted at this affair, or that it is a misfortune for me to be beloved by a handsome lady.' 'Ah, Diego! (he replied) you talk like a young man: you look only at the bait, without perceiving the hook; you consider only the pleasure, but I foresee the disagreeable consequences. All will come to light in the end. If you continue coming to sing at our door, you will inflame the passion of Mergelina, who, perhaps, losing all restraint, will betray her weakness before her husband Doctor Oloroso; and he, who appears so complaisant at present, because he believes he has no reason to be jealous, will become furious, revenge himself upon her, and, in all probability, make both you and me feel the effects of his rage.' 'Why, truly (said I),

Señor Marcos, your reasons are convincing, and I submit myself wholly to your advice: give me, therefore, directions how to behave, in order to prevent mischief.' 'We have nothing to do (answered he), but to give over our concert: appear no more before my mistress; and when you are no longer seen, she will retrieve her quiet. Stay at your master's house, whither I will come, and we will play upon the guitar, without danger.' 'With all my heart (said I), and I promise never to set foot within your door again.' I resolved, in good earnest, to be as good as my word, and, for the future, to keep myself close in the shop, since the sight of me was so dangerous.

In the meantime, honest Marcos, with all his prudence, found, in a very few days, that the means he had contrived, to extinguish the flame of Doña Mergelina, produced a quite contrary effect. This lady, not having heard me sing for two nights successively, asked him, why we had discontinued our concert, and for what reason I no longer appeared? He replied, I was so busy, that I had not a moment to bestow on my pleasures. She seemed satisfied with this excuse, and for three days more supported my absence with fortitude enough; but at the end of that time, my princess lost all patience, and said to her squire, 'You deceive me, Marcos; Diego must have some other reason for not coming hither: there is some mystery in it, which I must have explained: speak therefore, I order you, and conceal nothing of the truth.' 'Madam (answered he, making use of another expedient), since you must know the truth, I will tell you, that he commonly found supper over, when he went home, after our concert; and he does not choose to run the risk of going to bed with an empty stomach.' 'How! with an empty stomach? (cried she, with marks of uneasiness), why had not you told me this sooner? Go to bed supperless! poor baby! Go to him instantly, and bring him hither this very evening. He shan't go home with an empty stomach: there shall always be a plate of something reserved for him.'

'What do I hear? (said the usher, affecting surprise at her discourse). Heavens, what a change! is it you, madam, that talk thus? How long have you been thus gentle and compassionate?' 'How long? (replied she, hastily) since your abode in this house; or rather since you condemned my disdainful carriage, and laboured to soften the roughness of my behaviour. But alas! (added she, in a melting strain), I have passed from one extremity to another! from being haughty and insensible, I am become too soft and tender! I love your young friend Diego, in spite of all my efforts to the contrary; and his absence, instead of weakening, adds new vigour to my love!' 'Is it possible (said the old man) that a lad who is neither handsome nor genteel, should be the object of such a violent passion? I would forgive your sentiments had they been inspired by some gentleman of shining accomplishments.' 'Ah, Marcos! (said Mergelina, interrupting him) I don't resemble the rest of my sex—or rather, notwithstanding all your long experience, you are but little acquainted with women, if you think that merit always determines their choice. If I may be allowed to judge by myself, deliberation has no share in their engagements: love is a disorder of the mind, by which we are involuntarily dragged and fastened to the object—it is a distemper by which we are seized as dogs are with madness: cease therefore to represent Diego as unworthy of my tenderness: let it suffice that my love finds in him a thousand good qualities which escape your notice, and, perhaps, only exist in my imagination. It is vain for you to tell me that neither his features nor his make deserve the least attention. He seems to me born to captivate, and fairer than the day! besides, he has a sweetness of voice that charms me, and in my opinion plays on the guitar with a grace peculiar to himself.' 'But, madam (replied Marcos), do you consider who this Diego is? the meanness of his condition?' 'Mine is not much higher than his (said she, interrupting him again); and if I was even a woman of quality, that should be no objection.'

The result of this conversation was, that the usher thinking he should make little progress with his remonstrances, ceased to oppose the infatuation of his mistress; as an expert pilot yields to the storm that drives him from the port in view. He did more for the satisfaction of his patroness; for coming to me, he took me aside, and having recounted what passed between her and him: 'You see, Diego (added he), that we cannot help continuing our concert at Mergelina's door. There is a necessity for that lady's seeing you again, my friend; otherwise, she will commit some piece of indiscretion, that may do infinite prejudice to her reputation.' I was not hard-hearted, but told Marcos, I would in the twilight repair to the place of assignation, with my guitar, and that he might go and regale his mistress with this agreeable piece of news. In this he did not fail; and that passionate inamorata was ravished to understand that she should have the pleasure of seeing and hearing me that very evening.

A disagreeable accident, however, had wellnigh balked her expectation. For I could not leave the shop before night, which, for my sins, was extremely dark; and as I groped along the street, and had got about half-way to the place of rendezvous, I was crowned, from a window, with the contents of a perfuming pan, that did not at all delight my sense of smelling; though I may safely say, I lost none of it, so exactly was I equipped. In this condition, I did not know what course to take. Had I returned to the shop, I should have afforded a very diverting scene to my comrades, and exposed myself to a thousand unsavoury jests; and I was shocked at the thought of going in this fine pickle to Mergelina: this last, however, I resolved upon, and going to the physician's house, found the old squire waiting for me at the door. When he told me that Doctor Oloroso, being in bed, we might freely divert ourselves; I answered, I must first clean my clothes; and then related my misfortune: he sympathized with me, and conducted me

into a hall where his mistress was, who no sooner learned my adventure, and saw my condition, than she grieved for me as much as if I had met with the greatest misfortune; and bestowed a thousand curses on the person who had thus accommodated me. 'But, madam (said Marcos to her), moderate your transports; and consider that this event being the pure effect of chance, ought not to be so deeply resented.' 'Why should not I (answered she) deeply resent the injury that has been done to this poor lamb, this dove without gall, who does not even complain of the outrage he has received? O that I was a man this moment to revenge it!'

She said a thousand things more that denoted the excess of her love, which she made appear no less by her actions; for while Marcos was busied in wiping me with a towel, she ran to her chamber and fetched from it a box full of all sorts of perfumes; sweetening my clothes with the scent of odoriferous drugs which she burned, and afterwards sprinkling them all over with essences. The fumigation and aspersion performed, this charitable lady went herself into the kitchen for some bread, wine, and slices of roasted mutton which she had set apart for my entertainment; and obliging me to eat, took pleasure in serving me, sometimes by cutting my victuals, and sometimes by filling wine; in spite of all that Marcos and I could say to dissuade her from such condescension. When I had supped, we gentlemen of the band began to tune our voices to our guitars, and performed a concert that charmed Mergelina. We affected, indeed, to sing those airs, the words of which flattered her passion; and it must be observed, that while I sung, I frequently ogled her with the tail of my eye, in such a manner as blew the coals of love; for I began to be pleased with the game. Although the concert lasted a long time, I was not at all tired, and as for the lady, to whom the hours seemed minutes, she would willingly have spent the night in hearing us; had not the old usher, to whom the minutes seemed hours, put her in mind of its being

late. This she gave him the trouble to repeat ten or twelve times; but she had to do with one who was indefatigable on that subject, and who gave her no rest, until I was gone. This experienced person, seeing his mistress abandoned to a foolish passion, was afraid of some cross accident; and his fear was soon justified: for the doctor either suspecting some secret intrigue, or agitated by the demon of jealousy, who had respected him hitherto, took it in his head to find fault with our concerts, which he forbade in a peremptory manner, and, without giving any reason for his disgust, declared that for the future, he would suffer no strangers to come within his doors.

Marcos advertised me of this declaration, which was particularly intended for me, and mortified me not a little; for I had conceived hopes I was sorry to forgo. Nevertheless, that I may act the faithful historian, I will own that I bore my misfortune with patience. This was not the case with Mergelina, whose sentiments were more inflamed than ever. 'My dear Marcos! (said she to her usher) from you alone I expect assistance: fall upon some method, I beg of you, to bring Diego and me together in private.' 'What do you ask? cried the old man, in a rage. I have been already but too complaisant; and will not undertake, by gratifying your silly passion, to dishonour my master, ruin your reputation, and entail infamy upon myself. I, who have always maintained the character of an irreproachable domestic! I will rather quit your family than serve you in such a shameful manner.' 'Ah, Marcos! (cried the lady, interrupting him, and frightened at his last words) you pierce my very heart, when you talk of leaving me! Cruel man! are you going to forsake me now, after having reduced me to this condition? Give me back my former pride, and that savageness of disposition you have deprived me of! Why do I not still possess these happy defects, which would have preserved my tranquillity? whereas, your indiscreet remonstrances have robbed me of the repose I en-

joyed! You have corrupted my morals, by endeavouring to correct them. But what do I say (added she), wretch that I am! why do I reproach you unjustly? No, my father, you are not the author of my misfortune, which cruel fate alone decrees! Don't therefore take notice, I conjure you, of the extravagant discourse that escapes me! Alas! my passion disorders my understanding! Have pity on my weakness, you are all my comfort, and if you have any regard for my life, do not refuse your assistance!'

At these words, her tears redoubling in such a manner that she could not go on, she covered her face with her handkerchief, and threw herself upon a chair like a person sinking under affliction. Old Marcos, who was perhaps the best soul of an usher that ever lived, could not resist such a moving sight, which affected him so much, that he even mingled his tears with those of his mistress, and said, with an air of tenderness, 'Ah, madam, how bewitching you are! I am not proof against your sorrow! My virtue is vanquished, and I promise you my assistance. I am not surprised that love has been able to make you forget your duty; when pity only has severed me from mine.' Accordingly, the usher, in spite of his irreproachable conduct, devoted himself very obligingly to the passion of Mergelina, and having come one morning to inform me of what had happened, told me at parting, that he had already concerted a plan for procuring a secret interview between the lady and me. This re-animated my hope, but in less than two hours after, I received a piece of very bad news. A journeyman apothecary in the neighbourhood, one of our customers, came in to be shaved, and while I prepared the lather, said, 'Señor Diego, what is the matter with your friend, the old squire, Marcos de Obregon? Do you know that he is going to leave Doctor Oloroso?' Upon my answering in the negative, he resumed, 'It is certainly true: he is to be dismissed this very day: his master and mine have been

just talking on that subject, while I was by; and to the best of my remembrance, their conversation was thus: 'Señor Apuntador (said the physician) I have a favour to ask: being dissatisfied with an old usher who has served me some time, I want to put my wife under the direction of a faithful, severe, and vigilant duenna.' 'I understand you (said my master, interrupting him), you have occasion for Dame Melancia, who was my wife's governante, and has lived in the family these six weeks that I have been a widower. Though she is very useful to me in housekeeping, I yield her to you, on account of my concern for your honour. You may depend upon her for the safety of your forehead: she is a jewel of a duenna, and a very dragon to guard the chastity of the female sex: during the whole term of twelve years that she was with my wife, who, you know, was both young and handsome, I never saw so much as the shadow of a gallant in my house. No, faith! it was no place for them to play pranks in, and let me tell you, the defunct, in the beginning, had a strong propensity to coquetry: but Dame Melancia soon reclaimed, and inspired her with a taste for virtue. In a word, she is a treasure, and you will thank me more than once for the present I make of her.' The doctor was rejoiced at this encomium, and Señor Apuntador and he are agreed, that the duenna shall this very day fill the place of the old usher.

This piece of news, which I believed, and was certainly true, disturbed the ideas of pleasure with which I had begun again to regale myself; and Marcos, in the afternoon, confounded them effectually, by confirming the report of the journeyman apothecary. 'My dear Diego (said the honest usher), I am very glad that Doctor Oloroso has dismissed me. A circumstance that spares me a great deal of trouble: for, I not only found myself engaged in a bad employment; but likewise under a necessity of contriving tricks and stratagems to bring Mergelina and you together in private. What a dilemma had I

brought myself into! Thank heaven, I am freed from those troublesome cares, and the dangers that attend them! For your part, my son, you ought to console yourself for the loss of a few sweet moments, which might have been followed by numberless sorrows.' I relished the reflections of Marcos, because I no longer had any hopes; and thought no more of the affair. I confess, I was not one of those stubborn lovers who are animated by the obstacles in their way: but had I been such a one, Dame Melancia was enough to make me quit my pursuit: for the character I had heard of that duenna seemed capable of driving any gallant to despair. Nevertheless, in whatever colours she had been painted to me, I learned two or three days after, that the doctor's wife had either lulled this Argus, or corrupted her fidelity. As I went out to shave one of our neighbours, a decent old woman stopping me in the street, asked if my name was not Diego de la Fuente: when I answered, Yes. 'Well, then (said she), you are the person I want. Come this night to Doña Mergelina's door, and make some signal by which you may be known and admitted into the house.' 'Very well (said I to her), we must first agree upon the signal. I can mimic a cat charmingly, and will mew several times.' 'That's enough (replied this she-Mercury) I will report your answer. Your servant Señor Diego—Heaven bless you—how handsome you are! By St. Agnes, if I were but fifteen years old, I would not choose to engage you for others.' So saying, the officious beldame went away.

You may well think that I was furiously agitated by this message. Adieu the reflection of Marcos! I expected night with the utmost impatience, and when I thought Doctor Oloroso might be asleep, went to her door, where I mewed so loud as to be heard at a good distance, and did great honour to the master who taught me such a polite art. In a moment, Mergelina herself having opened the door softly and let me in, shut it again in the same manner; and we went together

into the hall where our last concert was held, and which was lighted by a small lamp that glimmered in the chimney: we sat down close by one another, for the benefit of conversing more at our ease; and were both very much affected: with this difference, however, that pleasure alone was the occasion of her emotion; while mine partook a little of fear. My princess in vain assured me, that we had nothing to dread on account of her husband: I was seized with a fit of shivering that disturbed my joy. 'Madam (said I to her) how have you been able to deceive the vigilance of your governante? After what I had heard of Dame Melancia, I did not think it possible for you to find means to let me hear from you, much less to give me a personal interview.' Doña Mergelina, smiling at my discourse, answered, 'You will cease to be surprised at the private opportunity we now enjoy, after I have told you what passed between my duenna and me. When she came first into the family, my husband loaded her with civilities, and said to me, "Mergelina, I commit you to the conduct of this discreet gentlewoman, who is a summary of all the virtues: a mirror which you must always have before your eyes, for your improvement in wisdom: this admirable person governed an apothecary's wife (a friend of mine) twelve years; and that in such an uncommon manner, that she became a kind of saint, under her instruction."

'This encomium, which the severe look of Dame Melancia did not belie, cost me a world of tears, and threw me into despair. I represented to myself the lectures I must hear from morn to night, and the rebukes I must everyday undergo. In short, I expected to be the most unhappy woman in the world: and thinking it needless to be on the reserve, in such a cruel state of expectation, I said to my duenna, with a resolute air, (as soon as I found myself alone with her) "You are, doubtless, preparing a great many sufferings for me; but I think proper to advertise you before hand, that I have not a great deal of patience;

and that I will endeavour to give you as many mortifications as I can: in the meantime, I declare that my heart entertains a passion which all your remonstrances shall not impair; so you may take your measures accordingly, and redouble your vigilance; for I confess I will spare nothing to deceive it." At these words, the grim-faced duenna (who I imagined, was about to give me a sample of her office), cleared up her austere countenance, and said with a smiling air, "I am charmed with your humour, your frankness encourages mine, and I see we are designed for one another. Ah, my fair Mergelina! how little are you acquainted with me when you judge by the character your spouse the doctor gives me, and by this sour aspect I assume! I am so far from being an enemy to pleasure, that my sole motive for hiring myself as the minister of jealous husbands, is, that I may the more effectually serve their handsome wives. I have long possessed the great mystery of disguising myself; and I may call myself doubly happy, because I enjoy the convenience of sin and the reputation of virtue at the same time. Between you and me, this is the scope of mankind in general: virtue itself is too difficult to be acquired; and therefore people are satisfied with possessing the appearance of it."

'"Leave your conduct to my direction (added the governante), and I warrant you, we will soon impose upon old Doctor Oloroso, who, by my troth, shall soon share the fate of Señor Apuntador: for I don't see why the forehead of a physician should be more respected than that of an apothecary. Poor Apuntador! how many tricks his wife and I have played him! She was a lovely creature! a good-humoured soul, heaven rest it! I can assure you, she made a good use of her youth; and did not want abundance of admirers, whom I introduced to the house without ever being discovered by her husband: look upon me therefore, madam, with a more favourable eye, and be persuaded, that whatever talent the old squire might have for your service, you will lose nothing by the

change, and perhaps find me still more useful than he was."

'I leave you to judge, Diego (continued Mergelina), how much I thought myself obliged to the duenna, for this frank declaration: for I looked upon her as a person of the most austere virtue; so apt are people to be deceived in women. Her sincerity gained my heart in a moment; I embraced her in a transport of joy, that convinced her how much I was charmed with my lot, in having her for a governante; and afterwards freely imparted my sentiments to her, and begged that she would, without loss of time, contrive a private meeting with you, which she has not failed to procure. This very morning she set at work that old woman who spoke to you, and who is an agent whom she often employed for the apothecary's wife. But the most pleasant part of this adventure (added she, laughing) is that Melancia, understanding from me that my husband commonly sleeps sound, has gone to bed to him, and this very minute supplies my place.' 'So much the worse, madam (said I to Mergelina), I cannot approve of this invention: your husband may wake and perceive the cheat.' 'He cannot perceive it (answered she, with some precipitation;) don't be uneasy on that score; nor let a groundless panic poison the delight you ought to enjoy with a young lady who has a regard for you.'

The old doctor's wife, observing that I was still dismayed, notwithstanding her assurance, did everything in her power to encourage me; and practised so many different endeavours for that purpose, that she succeeded at last, and I resolved to profit by the occasion: but just as Cupid, attended by the sports and smiles, was about to crown my happiness, we were astonished by a loud rap at the street-door. Immediately love and his train took wing, like a flock of fearful birds dispersed by sudden noise! Mergelina concealed me in a hurry under a table that was in the hall; then blowing out the lamp, as it had been agreed upon between her governante and her, in case such a

cross accident should happen, she went to the chamber where her husband was a-bed. In the meantime the whole house rung with the repeated knocks that were thundered at the door; and the doctor, starting out of his sleep, called Melancia. The duenna, jumping out of bed (although the doctor, who mistook her for his wife, bade her lie still), joined her mistress in the dark, who, feeling her, called Melancia also, and bid her go and see who knocked at the door: 'Madam (answered the governante), I am here. Go to bed again, if you please, and I will go and see what is the matter.' Meanwhile Mergelina, having undressed, slipped into bed to the doctor, who had not the least suspicion of the trick. 'Tis true, indeed, this scene was performed in the dark by two actresses, one of whom was matchless in her way, and the other an admirable proficient.

The duenna, wrapped in a *robe de chambre*, appearing soon after with a candle in her hand, said to her master, 'Señor Doctor, be so good as to rise: the bookseller, Fernandez de Buendia, our neighbour, has fallen into an apoplexy, and you are desired to go with all haste to his assistance.' The physician dressed himself as soon as he could, and went away; while his wife, in a loose gown, came along with the duenna into the hall where I was, and drawing me from under the table, more dead than alive, 'You have nothing to fear, Diego (said she), recollect yourself.' Then, in a few words, she told me what had happened, and wanted to renew the conversation which had been interrupted; but this the governante opposed, saying, 'Madam, perhaps your husband will find the bookseller dead, and return immediately. Besides (added she, perceiving me benumbed with fear), what would you do with this poor lad? He is in no condition to maintain the conference, which you had better defer till to-morrow.' Doña Mergelina consented to this proposal, not without regret; so well did she love the present time: and I believe she was very much mortified, that she could not then bestow

upon the doctor the new cap she had destined for him.

As for my own part, less sorry for having been balked of love's most precious favours, than glad to be out of danger, I went back to my master's house, where I spent the night in reflecting upon my adventure. I hesitated some time about going to the place of rendezvous next night, having as bad an opinion of this second enterprise as of the first: but the devil, who is always laying close siege to us, or rather, on such occasions, takes possession of our faculties, suggested that I should be a great booby to stop short in the middle of such a delightful journey; represented to my fancy Mergelina adorned with new charms, and heightened the value of the pleasures that awaited me: so that I resolved to pursue my point; and flattering myself with the hope of behaving with more courage than before, I repaired in this disposition to the doctor's door between eleven and twelve next night, which was so dark that not one star appeared in the firmament. I mewed two or three times, to give notice that I was in the street; and nobody coming to the door, I not only repeated the signal, but also mimicked all the different expressions of a cat, which a shepherd of Olmedo had taught me; and acquitted myself so well, that a neighbour going home, and mistaking me for one of those animals whose notes I imitated, took up a flint-stone he found at his feet, and threw it at me with his whole strength, saying, 'Curse on the caterwauler!' I received the blow upon my head, which stunned me so much, that I had well-nigh tumbled backwards. I felt myself wounded: a circumstance sufficient to give me a disgust at gallantry; and, losing my love with my blood, returned to our house, where I alarmed and raised the whole family. My master examined and dressed my wound, which he thought dangerous; but it was attended with no bad consequence, and in three weeks disappeared. During all that time I heard not one syllable about Mergelina; and it is not unlikely that Dame Melancia,

in order to detach her from me, introduced her to some better acquaintance. But this gave me no concern; for as soon as I found myself perfectly cured I left Madrid, in order to perform my tour of Spain.

CHAPTER VIII

Gil Blas and his companion come up with a man, whom they perceive soaking crusts of bread in a spring; and enter into conversation with him

Señor Diego de la Fuente recounted a good many more adventures that had happened to him; but, in my opinion, so little worth the breath they cost, that I shall pass them over in silence; though I was obliged to hear the recital, which was so tedious, that it brought us as far as Ponte de Duero. In this village we stayed the remaining part of the day; and, at the inn where we lodged, ordered for supper a dish of cabbage-soup and a roasted hare, the species of which we were at great pains to prove beforehand. On the morrow, at break of day, we pursued our journey, after having replenished our bottle with pretty good wine, and furnished our knapsack with some slices of bread, and the half of the hare which remained from our supper.

When we had gone about two leagues, we began to be hungry; and perceiving several large trees, which formed an agreeable shade in the fields, about two hundred paces from the highway, we went thither to make a halt, and found a man, seven or eight and twenty years old, soaking some crusts in a fountain. A long sword lay by him on the grass, with a haversack, of which he had unloaded his shoulders; and, though he was poorly clothed, he discovered a good shape and mien. We accosted him in a civil manner, upon which he saluted us with great complaisance; and presenting his crusts, asked, with a smile, if we would be of his mess: we answered yes, provided he

would give us leave to improve the repast, by joining our breakfast with his. He freely consenting, we immediately produced our victuals, which afforded no unpleasing view to the stranger, who cried in a transport of joy, 'How, gentlemen! egad, there's store of munition for the belly! I see you are provident people: for my own part, I seldom travel so well provided, but depend a good deal upon chance. Notwithstanding my present situation, however, I may say without vanity, that I sometimes make a pretty brilliant appearance. You must know, that I am usually treated like a prince, and have guards in my train.' 'I understand you (said Diego); you would intimate that you are a player.' 'You have hit it (replied the other); I have acted these fifteen years at least; for I performed some small parts while I was yet a child.' 'To be plain with you (said the barber, shaking his head), I can scarce believe what you say. I know what sort of people the comedians are: these gentlemen don't travel a-foot, and dine with St. Antony as you do: therefore I cannot help thinking that you are no more than a candle-snuffer.' 'You may think of me as you please (replied the stage-player); but I affirm, that I act the very top parts, and among the rest that of the lover.' 'If that be the case (said my comrade), I congratulate you upon it; and am very proud, that Señor Gil Blas and I have the honour to breakfast with a person of such importance.'

We then began to gnaw our crusts, and the precious remains of the hare, bestowing such rude embraces on the bottle, that it was empty in a very short time; and being so busy with what we were about, that we scarce spoke one word during the repast; which being ended, the conversation was thus resumed: 'I am surprised (said the barber to the player) to see you in such indifferent circumstance: for a stage-hero, methinks you have a very needy appearance: you'll pardon my freedom.' 'Your freedom! (cried the actor) ah! truly you are little acquainted with Melchor

Zapata[1]. Thank heaven, I am not at all exceptious: you do me a pleasure in speaking so frankly; for I myself love to tell my mind without reserve. I sincerely own I am not rich. Look (added he, shewing that his doublet was lined with play-bills), this is the stuff that usually serves me for lining; and if you have any curiosity to see my wardrobe, it shall be forthwith gratified.' At the same time he took out of his knapsack an old suit laced with tinsel, a sorry hat with some old plumes of feathers, a pair of silk stockings full of holes, and red buskins very much worn. 'You see (said he) I am tolerably poor.' 'That's what surprises me (replied Diego). So you have neither wife nor daughter?' 'I have a wife, young and handsome (said Zapata); yet I am never a bit the better for it, so wonderfully capricious is my fate. I married a beautiful actress, in hopes that she would not let me starve; and, unfortunately for me, she is incorruptibly chaste. Who the devil would not have been deceived as I was? there happened to be one virtuous woman among the strollers, and she must fall to my lot!' 'Truly you have had bad luck (said the barber): but why did not you marry an actress of the King's company at Madrid, in which case you could not have been disappointed?' 'I grant it (replied the player); but a plague upon it, a little country-stroller dares not aspire to those famous heroines: that is as much as an actor of the Prince's company can do; some of whom are even obliged to match in the city. Luckily for them, the city is well stored, and they often light on yoke-fellows not a whit inferior to those princesses who were brought up behind the scenes.'

'Have you never endeavoured (said my companion to him) to be introduced into that company? Must one have infinite merit to be admitted into it?' 'Good!

[1] A Zapata is mentioned in *Marcos de Obregon*, Relacion I, Decanso i. A *baile entremesado*, entitled *El Mercader*, printed at the end of the *Vergel de entremeses y conceptos del donaire, con diferentes bayles, loas, y mojigangas* (Zaragoza, 1675), is ascribed to Melchor Zapata.

(replied Melchor) you are merry with your infinite merit. It is composed of twenty actors: ask their characters in town, and you will hear them finely handled. More than one half deserve to carry the knapsack still; but for all that, it is no easy matter to be received among them. One must have money, or powerful friends, to supply the want of talent. This I ought to know, since I am just come from making a trial at Madrid, where I have been hooted and hissed in a hellish manner, although I deserved to be applauded to the skies; for I roared, ranted, burlesqued nature a hundred times; and moreover, in my declamation, clapped my clenched fist to my princess's nose. In a word, I performed in the taste of the great actors in vogue; and yet the same audience that relished this behaviour in them, could not endure it in me. You see the force of prejudice! wherefore finding myself incapable of pleasing on that stage, and having nothing to secure my reception in defiance of the town, I am going back to Zamora, where I shall rejoin my wife and comrades, who are not in the most flourishing circumstances. God grant that we may not be obliged to beg our way to the next town; a misfortune which has already happened to us more than once.'

With these words this prince of the drama sprung up, shouldered his knapsack, girded on his sword, and, at parting, pronounced with a theatrical air, 'Gentlemen, adieu! may the Gods exhaust their bounties on you!' 'And you (replied Diego): may you, at your return to Zamora, behold your wife's condition and temper changed!' Señor Zapata no sooner showed his heels than he began to rehearse as he walked, and immediately the barber and I hissed, to put him in mind of his trial; the noise reaching his ears, he thought he still heard the cat-calls of Madrid; upon which he looked back, and perceiving that we made merry at his expense, far from being incensed at our buffoonery, took all in good part, and continued his noise, bursting into fits of laughter all

the way. We returned his mirth with all our might; and getting back into the high road, pursued our journey.

CHAPTER IX

The condition in which Diego finds his family; and an account of the rejoicings: after which Gil Blas bids him farewell

Having slept that night between Moyados and Valpuesta, in a little village whose name I have forgot, we arrived next day, about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, in the plain of Olmedo. 'Señor Gil Blas (said my comrade), there is the place of my nativity, which I cannot behold again without transport; so natural it is to love one's country.' 'Señor Diego (answered I), one who expresses such regard for his native country, might, I think, have spoke of it a little more advantageously than you have done: Olmedo seems to be a city, and you told me it was only a village. It ought, at least, to be dignified with the epithet of market-town.' 'I beg its pardon (replied the barber); but I must own, that after having seen Madrid, Toledo, Saragossa, and all the great cities I touched at in making my tour of Spain, I look upon the small ones as villages.' As we advanced into the plain, we thought we observed a great concourse of people near Olmedo; and when we were near enough to discern objects, we found something to attract our attention.

There were three tents pitched at a small distance from one another, and hard-by a great number of cooks and scullions preparing a feast: some laid the cloth on long tables, placed under the tents: some filled earthen pitchers with wine; others made the pots boil, and others again turned spits that were loaded with all sorts of meat: but what I considered more attentively than all the rest, was a great stage, raised and adorned with decorations of painted paper of different colours, and garnished with Greek and

Latin devices. The barber no sooner perceived the inscriptions than he said, 'All these Greek mottoes favour strongly of my uncle Thomas, who, I'll hold a wager, has a hand in the business; for, between you and me, he is a learned man, and has a power of college-books by heart: his greatest fault is, that he incessantly quotes passages from them in conversation, which is not agreeable to everybody. Besides (added he), my uncle has translated a good many Greek and Latin authors, and is quite master of the ancients, as one may see by the learned remarks which he has made: had it not been for him, we should never have known, that in the city of Athens children cried when they were flogged: we owe that discovery to his profound erudition.'

After my comrade and I had observed all those things which I have mentioned, we were curious to know the cause of such preparations, and went forward to inquire, when Diego recognized in the director of the feast, Señor Thomas de la Fuente, whom he accosted with great eagerness. The schoolmaster did not, at first, know the young barber; so much was he altered during an absence of ten years: but recollecting him at last, he embraced him affectionately, saying, 'What! do I see thee then, Diego, my dear nephew? Do I see thee returned to the town where thou first sawest the light? Thou art come to revisit thy household-gods; and heaven restores thee safe and sound to thy kindred! O day, thrice and four times happy! O day, worthy to be marked with a white stone! A world of changes have happened, my friend (pursued he): thy uncle Pedro, the poet, has fallen a victim to Pluto, having died three months ago. That miser, while alive, was afraid of wanting the necessaries of life. *Argenti pallebat amore*[1]. For though he received large pensions from several grandees, he did not spend ten pistoles a year for his subsistence; and was even served by a valet whom he did not maintain. That fool, more senseless than the Grecian Aris-

[1] Adapted from Horace, *Satires*, II, ii, 78.

tippus, who ordered his slaves to throw away, in the deserts of Africa, the riches they carried, as a burden that incommoded them in their march;—he, I say, heaped up all the gold and silver he could scrape together; and for whom? for those very heirs he would not so much as see. He died worth thirty thousand ducats, which thy father, thy uncle Bertrand, and I, have equally shared among us; so that we are able to settle our children to our heart's desire. My brother Nicolas has already disposed of thy sister Theresa, whom he has given in marriage to the son of one of our alcaldes. *Connubio junxit stabili, propriumque dicavit*[1]. These nuptials, performed under the most happy auspices, we have celebrated these two days with such preparations; three tents being pitched in the plain, one for each of the three heirs of Pedro, who, in their turns, bear the expense of the day. I wish thou hadst arrived sooner, to have seen the beginning of our rejoicings. The day before yesterday, when they were married, thy father gave a sumptuous entertainment, which was followed by a course at the ring: thy uncle the mercer treated yesterday, and regaled us with a pastoral feast; ten of the genteelest youths, and as many handsome maidens, were dressed like shepherds, all the ribbons and points in his shop being employed to adorn them. This gay company performed several dances, and sung a thousand light and tender catches: nevertheless, though nothing was ever more gallant, the spectators did not seem to relish it, which shows that pastoral is quite out of date.'

'To-day (added he) everything is to be at my cost, and I will exhibit to the inhabitants of Olmedo a show of my own invention. *Finis coronabit opus.* I have ordered a theatre to be raised, on which (God willing) I will make my scholars represent a piece of my own composing, entitled, *The Diversions of Muley Bugentuf, King of Morocco.* It will be extremely well acted, because I have scholars who declaim like the players

[1] Adapted from Virgil, *Aeneid* I, 73.

of Madrid: they are the sons of fashionable people living at Peñafiel and Segovia, who are boarded with me, and are become excellent actors under my instruction. Their performance will appear to be of a masterly stamp, *ut ita dicam*. With regard to the piece, I shall say nothing, that thou mayest enjoy the pleasure of surprise; but only observe that it must transport the spectators: for it is one of those tragic subjects which wake the soul by the images of death present to the view. I am of Aristotle's opinion, that the chief end of tragedy is to raise terror. O! if I had attached myself to the drama, I would have introduced none but bloody-minded princes and heroic assassins on the scene, and would have bathed myself in gore: and in my tragedies, not only the principal persons, but even their guards should have perished. I would have murdered them all, to the very prompter. In a word, my taste is horror; and we see that such poems captivate the multitude, support the luxury of the players, and enable the author to live at his ease[1].'

Just as he had done speaking, we saw coming out of the village into the plain a great concourse of men and women. These were no other than the new-married couple, accompanied by their relations and friends, and preceded by ten or twelve musicians, who, playing all together, performed a most thundering concert. We went up to meet them, and Diego made himself known; upon which the whole assembly broke out into shouts of joy, and every one was eager to embrace him; so that he was sufficiently employed in receiving their expressions of friendship. His whole family, as well as all who were present, having well-nigh smothered him with caresses, his father said to him, 'Welcome, Diego; thou findest thy parents somewhat bettered in their circumstances, my child. I shall say no more at present, but explain myself more particularly by and by.' Meanwhile the company,

[1] Thomas is a caricature of Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon, who had almost exhausted the possibilities of horror in *Rhadamiste et Zénobie* (1711).

advancing into the plain, repaired to the tents, and sat down at the tables that were covered; and I and my companion whom I would not quit, dined with the bridegroom and bride, who seemed to be very well matched. The repast was pretty long, because the schoolmaster had the vanity to furnish three courses, in order to excel his brothers, who had not treated with such magnificence.

After the banquet, all the guests expressed impatience to see the representation of Señor Thomas's piece, not doubting (as they said) that the production of such a fine genius would answer their most sanguine expectation. Accordingly approaching the stage, before which the musicians had already taken their seats, in order to play between the acts, everybody, in the most profound silence, waited for the beginning. The actors appeared on the scene, and the author, with his poem in his hand, sat down on one side, to prompt them. It was not without reason that he told us the piece was tragical; for, in the first act, the king of Morocco, by way of recreation, shot a hundred Moorish slaves with arrows: in the second, he beheaded thirty Portuguese officers, whom one of his captains had made prisoners of war: and in the third and last, this monarch, mad with his wives, sets fire with his own hand to a detached palace, in which they were shut up, and reduces them and it to ashes. The Moorish slaves, as well as the Portuguese officers, were figures of osier, very artfully made; and the palace, composed of paper, seemed all in a flame by an artificial firework. This conflagration, accompanied with a thousand doleful shrieks, that seemed to issue from the midst of the flames, concluded the piece, and closed the scene in a very diverting manner. The whole plain echoed with the applause that was given to such a fine tragedy, which justified the good taste of the poet, and showed that he knew how to choose his subject.

I thought there was no more to be seen, after *The Diversions of Muley Bugentuf*; but I was mistaken:

for we were advertised of a new show by the sound of drums and trumpets. This was a distribution of prizes: Thomas de la Fuente, to make the feast more solemn, having ordered all his scholars (as well those who were boarded with him as the rest) to compose, and intending to bestow on those who had succeeded best, books bought at Segovia with his own coin. Immediately therefore two school-forms were brought upon the stage, with a press full of little books handsomely bound: then all the actors returned upon the scene, and ranged themselves round Señor Thomas, who looked as big as the head master of a college, and held a paper in his hand, on which were written the names of those who were to obtain the prizes: this he gave to the King of Morocco, who began to read it with a loud voice; and every scholar who was called, going in a respectful manner, receiving a book from the pedant, was afterwards crowned with bays, and ordered to sit down on one of the benches, that he might be exposed to the admiration of the crowd. Nevertheless, how desirous soever the schoolmaster was of sending home the spectators satisfied, he could by no means effect it; because having distributed almost all the prizes among his boarders, as the custom is, the mothers of some of the rest, being present, were offended; and openly accused the pedant of partiality, in such a manner, that this entertainment, which had hitherto been so glorious for him, like to have ended in mischief, like the feast of the Lapithae[1].

[1] The Centaurs, at the marriage of Pirithous, King of the Lapithae, endeavoured to capture the bride Hippodamia and her handmaidens. They were defeated after a desperate struggle. Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoseon*, xii, 210 ff.

THE END OF THE SECOND BOOK

BOOK III

CHAPTER I

The arrival of Gil Blas at Madrid; with an account of the first master whom he served in that city

HAVING stayed some time with the young barber, I afterwards joined a merchant of Segovia, in his way through Olmedo, with four mules, on which he had transported goods to Valladolid, and was returning with them unloaded. We became acquainted on the road, and he conceived such a friendship for me, that he insisted upon my lodging at his house when we arrived at Segovia. There he detained me two days; and when I was ready to set out for Madrid, along with a carrier, he entrusted me with a letter, which he desired I would in person deliver, according to the direction, without telling me that it was a recommendation. I did not fail to present it to Señor Mateo Melendez, a woollen-draper, who lived near the Sun Gate at the corner of the Trunkmaker's Street; and he no sooner opened it, and read the contents, than he said, with a complaisant air, 'Señor Gil Blas, Pedro Palacio, my correspondent, writes so pressingly in your behalf, that I cannot dispense with your lodging at my house. He moreover entreats me to find a place for you; and I undertake the office with pleasure, being persuaded that I shall find no difficulty in procuring for you a good settlement.'

I accepted the offer of Melendez with so much the more joy, as my finances were sensibly diminished: but I did not live long at his expense; for in eight days he gave me to know, that he had recommended me to

a gentleman of his acquaintance, who wanted a valet de chambre; and that, in all probability, I would be preferred to the post. The gentleman coming in at that moment, 'Señor (said Melendez, shewing me to him), this is the young man I mentioned to you. He is a youth of honour and sobriety, and I can answer for his good behaviour as much as for my own.' The cavalier having looked at me attentively, said he liked my countenance, and took me into his service. 'He may follow me now (added he), and I will instruct him in his duty.' At these words he bade the merchant good morrow, and conducting me into the great street just by St. Philip's Church, we entered a pretty good house, one wing of which he possessed; and going up five or six steps of a stair, he introduced me into a chamber, secured by two strong doors, which he opened, and in the first I perceived a small window, grated with iron: through this chamber we went into another, where there was a bed and other furniture, more calculated for convenience than show.

If my new master considered me attentively at the house of Melendez, I examined him with great earnestness in my turn. He was a man turned of fifty, seemed to be serious and reserved, though good-natured withal; so that I conceived no bad opinion of him. He put several questions to me about my family, and being satisfied with my answers, 'Gil Blas (said he), I believe thou art a sensible young fellow, and I am very glad to have such an one in my service. As for thee, thou shalt have no cause to complain: I will give thee six reals a-day for victuals, clothes, wages and all, exclusive of some little perquisites thou mayst enjoy, and I am easily served; for I keep no table, but always dine abroad. All that thou hast to do in a morning is to clean my clothes, and thou shalt be at thy own disposal during the rest of the day: take care only to come back early in the evening, and wait for me at the door. This is all I exact.' After having thus prescribed my duty, he took out his purse and gave six reals, as a beginning to fulfil articles; then

going out, he locked the doors himself, and putting the keys in his pocket, 'Friend (said he), don't follow me: go where you please; but be sure to be on the stair when I return in the evening.' So saying, he left me to dispose of myself as I should think proper.

'In good faith, Gil Blas (said I to myself), thou couldst not have found a better master: what! to light on a man, who, for brushing his clothes, and helping him to dress of a morning, gives me six reals per day, with liberty to walk and take my diversion, like a scholar during the holidays! Egad, this is the happiest of all situations! No wonder that I was so desirous of being at Madrid: I certainly had some supernatural intimation of the happiness that awaited me.' I spent the day in strolling about the streets, diverting myself with looking at everything that was new to me, and this gave me sufficient employment. In the evening, after having supped at an eating-house not far from our lodgings, I betook myself to the place whither my master had ordered me to repair, and where he himself arrived three quarters of an hour after me, seemingly well pleased with my punctuality. 'Very well (said he), this is right: I love to see servants attentive to their duty.' So saying, he opened the doors of his apartment, and shut them again as soon as we had got in: being in the dark, he took a tinder-box and struck a light, by the help of which I assisted to undress him. When he was a-bed, I lighted, by his order, a lamp that stood in his chimney, and carried the candle into the antechamber, where I went to sleep in a bed without curtains. Next morning he got up between nine and ten o'clock, and, when I had dusted his clothes, counted me six more reals, and dismissed me till the evening: after which he went out also, not without locking his doors with great care; so we parted again for the remaining part of the day.

Such was our manner of living, which I found very agreeable, and the best joke of all was, I did not know my master's name: Melendez himself was ignorant of

it, being only acquainted with him as a gentleman who came sometimes to his shop, and bought cloth of him as he had occasion for it. Our neighbours could give me no better information; all of them assuring me, that my master was utterly unknown to them, although he had lived two years in the ward. They told me, that he visited nobody in the neighbourhood; and some of them, accustomed to make rash inferences, concluded from thence, that he was no better than he should be. They went still farther, suspected him to be a spy of the King of Portugal[1], and charitably advertised me of the suspicion, that I might take my measures accordingly. I was disturbed at this advice; and reflected, that if the thing was so, I should run the risk of visiting the prison of Madrid. I could not confide in my innocence, my past misfortunes having taught me to dread justice; for I had found by experience, that if she does not put the innocent to death, she at least treats them with so little hospitality, that her lodgers are always in a very melancholy situation.

In such a delicate conjuncture I consulted Melendez, who did not know how to advise me; for if he could not believe that my master was a spy, on the other hand, he had no certain reason to think otherwise: so that I resolved to observe my patron narrowly, and to leave him, if I should perceive that he was undoubtedly an enemy to the State; but I thought prudence, and the easiness of my place, required that I should be first perfectly sure of his practices. With this view I began to keep a strict eye over his actions; and in order to sound him, 'Sir (said I, one evening, while I undressed him), one does not know how to live, so as to avoid slander: the world is very malicious, and we, among others, are very little obliged to our neighbours. You cannot guess in what manner the malicious

[1] The chronology is impossible. The Kingdom of Portugal was in abeyance between 1580 and 1640, and yet the events recorded in the text are supposed to occur during this period.

creatures talk of us.' 'Right, Gil Blas (answered he): but what can they say of us, child?' 'Ah! truly (I replied) scandal never wants matter. Virtue herself furnishes food for it. Our neighbours say that we are dangerous people, and deserve to be taken notice of by the Government. In a word, you are thought to be a spy for the King of Portugal.' While I pronounced these words, I looked hard at my master, as Alexander eyed his physician; and employing all my penetration to discover what effect my report produced in him, thought I observed an emotion that too well agreed with the conjectures of the neighbourhood, and he fell into a fit of musing, upon which I did not put the most favourable construction: but he soon recovered himself, and said with an air of tranquillity, 'Gil Blas, let our neighbours think as they please, without making our peace depend on their imaginations; and since we give them no cause to think amiss of us, let their opinion give us no uneasiness.'

Upon this he went to bed, and I followed his example, without knowing what to think of the matter. Next day, just as we were going out in the morning, we heard a loud rap at the outward door: my master opened the other, and looking through the small grate, saw a decent sort of a man at it, who said, 'Señor Cavalier, I am an alguazil, and come hither to tell you, that the corregidor would speak with you.' 'What does he want with me?' (replied my patron). 'That I am ignorant of, señor (said the alguazil); but if you will take the trouble to go to his house, you will soon know.' 'I am his most humble servant (returned my master); but have no manner of business with him.' So saying, he shut the second door; and having walked up and down for some time, like one alarmed at the discourse of the alguazil, put six reals into my hand, saying, 'Gil Blas, thou mayst go out, my friend. I do not intend to go abroad so early, and have no further occasion for thee this morning.' These words made me believe, that the fear of being appre-

hended obliged him to stay at home: so that when I left him, in order to see if my suspicions were unjust, I hid myself in a place from whence I could see him, if he should come out; and should have had the patience to stay there the whole morning, had he not spared me that trouble. But an hour after, I saw him walking in the street with an air of assurance, that at first confounded my penetration; but, far from being duped by those appearances, I distrusted them, having no favourable opinion of the man. I looked upon his composure as a piece of affectation, and even imagined that his remaining at home was with a view of securing his gold and jewels; and that, in all probability, he would consult his safety by immediate flight. I did not expect to see him again, and hesitated about going in the evening to give my attendance at the door; so sure I was that he would quit the city instantly, to escape from the danger that threatened him. I did not fail, however, of being there; and, to my utter surprise, my master returned at his usual time, went to bed without shewing the least uneasiness, and got up next day with the same tranquillity.

When we had done dressing, somebody knocked at the door; upon which, my master looking through the grating, perceived the same alguazil who had been there the preceding day, and asked what he wanted. 'Open, (answered the alguazil) here is the Señor Corregidor.' At this formidable name, my blood froze in my veins! for I was cursedly afraid of these gentlemen since I had passed through their hands; and wished that moment to be an hundred leagues from Madrid: but my patron less afraid than I, opened the door, and received the judge with great respect. 'You see (said the corregidor to him), I do not come to your lodgings with many attendants, being desirous of doing everything with as little noise as possible: and I believe that you deserve this respect, notwithstanding the ugly reports that are spread of you. Tell me, therefore, your name, and business at Madrid?' 'Señor (replied my master), I was born in New Castile, and

my name is Don Bernardo de Castil Blazo: with regard to my business, I divert myself in walking, frequenting shews, and enjoying the agreeable conversation of a few select friends.' 'Doubtless (said the judge) you have a great income.' 'No, sir (resumed my patron, interrupting him), I have neither rents, lands, nor house.' 'How do you live, then?' (replied the corregidor). 'On that which you shall see' (said Don Bernardo);—at the same time, he lifted up a hanging, opened a door which I had not before observed, then another behind that, and carried the judge into a closet, where he shewed him a great trunk filled with pieces of gold.

Then he went on; 'Señor, you know that the Spaniards are enemies to work: nevertheless, how averse soever they may be to trouble, I may safely say that I excel them all in that particular: having a fund of laziness that renders me incapable of any manner of employment. If I had a mind to dignify my vices, I would call this laziness a philosophical indolence, the work of a mind weaned from everything that is most ardently pursued in life. But I will frankly own that I am constitutionally idle: and so idle, that if I was under a necessity of working for my livelihood, I believe I should let myself die of hunger. With a view therefore, to lead a life agreeable to my humour, to free myself from the trouble of managing my estate, and above all things to save myself the plague of a steward; I have converted my whole patrimony, consisting of several considerable inheritances, into ready money. In this trunk are fifty thousand ducats; more than I shall ever have occasion for, was I to live another age; for I don't spend a thousand a year, and am already turned of fifty. I am not at all afraid of what is to happen; for thank heaven, I am not addicted to any one of the three things which commonly bring men to ruin: I am not a slave to my stomach, I play only for amusement, and am quite cured of women. So, that I am under no apprehension of being ranked in my old age,

among those voluptuous dotards who purchase the favours of courtesans at an extravagant price.'

'What a happy man you are! (said the corregidor) you are very unjustly suspected of being a spy; that office being very unfit for a person of your character. Proceed, Don Bernardo (added he), continue the life you now lead; and far from disturbing your happiness, I declare myself the guardian of it; I beg the favour of your friendship, and offer you mine in return.' 'Ah Señor! (cried my master, penetrated with these obliging expressions), I accept the precious offer you make, with equal joy and respect: for in vouchsafing me your friendship, you increase my wealth and crown my felicity.' After this conversation, which the alguazil and I overheard at the closet-door, the corregidor took his leave of Don Bernardo, who could not enough express his gratitude; while I, to second my master, and assist him in doing the honours of the house, overwhelmed the alguazil with civilities, making a thousand profound bows, though in the bottom of my soul, I harboured that disdain and aversion which every man of honour has for one of his occupation.

CHAPTER II

The astonishment of Gil Blas, when he met Captain Rolando at Madrid, and the curious things which that robber recounted to him

Don Bernardo de Castil Blazo, after having waited upon the corregidor to the street, returned with all expedition, to lock his strong box and all the doors that secured it. Then we went out both very well satisfied: he for having acquired a powerful friend, and I for being now ensured in my six reals a day. The desire I had to recount this adventure to Melendez, made me take the road to his house, which when I had almost reached, I perceived Captain Rolando! I was confounded at finding him in this place, and could

not help shivering at sight of him! He knew me at once, accosted me very gravely, and preserving still his air of superiority, ordered me to follow him. I obeyed with fear and trembling, saying to myself, 'Alas! he will, doubtless, make me pay what I owe him. Whither will he lead me? perhaps to some subterranean abode in this city. A plague upon it! If I thought so, I would let him see in a hurry, that I have not got the gout in my toes.' As I walked behind him, I resolved to take particular notice of the place where he should stop, from which I proposed to scamper off as fast as my legs could carry me, should it seem in the least suspicious.

But Rolando soon banished my fear, by going into a noted tavern, whither I followed him; and where he called for the best wine, and bespoke dinner; in the meantime, we went into a room by ourselves, where the captain spoke in this manner. 'Thou must be surprised, Gil Blas, to meet thy old commander in this place; and wilt be more so still when thou shalt hear what I am going to relate. That day on which I left thee in our subterrannean retreat, and set out for Mansilla with my whole company, in order to dispose of the mules and horses which we had taken the preceding day, it was our fortune to meet the son of the corregidor of Leon in his coach, accompanied by four men on horseback well armed. We made two of them bite the dust, and the others betake themselves to flight; while the coachman, afraid of his master's life, cried, in a suppliant voice, "O dear gentlemen! in the name of God, do not kill the only son of the corregidor of Leon." My people did not at all relent at these words, which on the contrary, inspired them with fury. "Gentlemen (said one among us), let not the son of our mortal enemy escape: how many people of our profession hath his father put to death? let us avenge them now, and sacrifice this victim to their manes." The rest of my men approved of this proposal; and even my lieutenant prepared to act the high-priest in this ceremony, when I held his hands;

saying, "Stop, at your peril! why should we shed blood unnecessarily? Let us be satisfied with the purse of this young man, whom (since he makes no resistance) it would be the utmost barbarity to kill: besides, he is not accountable for the actions of his father, who does no more than his duty, in condemning us to death; just as we do ours, in rifling travellers on the highway."

'My intercession was far from being unserviceable to the corregidor's son, from whom we took nothing but his money; and having carried off the horses of the two men we had slain, we sold them together with our own, at Mansilla; then returning to our cavern, which we reached next day before it was light, we were not a little astonished to find the trap-door lifted up; and our surprise redoubled when we saw Leonarda fettered in the kitchen. Being briefly informed by her of what had happened, we wondered how thou couldst outwit us, never having thought thee capable of playing such a clever trick, and we forgave thee on account of the invention. Having untied our cook-maid, and given orders to dress victuals for us, we went to look after our horses in the stable, where the old negro, who had received no sustenance for four and twenty hours, was at the last gasp. We would have given him all the assistance in our power; but he had lost his senses, and was otherwise so low, that notwithstanding our goodwill, we left the poor devil in the clutches of death. This did not deprive us of our appetite, which having satisfied with a sumptuous meal, we retired to our several chambers, and slept the rest of the day: when we got up, Leonarda let us know that Domingo was no more, upon which we carried him to the cellar, where thou mayst remember thy bed was, and there performed his funeral obsequies, as if he had enjoyed the honour of being our companion.

'Five or six days after, it happened, that intending to make an excursion, we one morning, on the skirts of the wood, fell in with three troops belonging to the

Holy Brotherhood, who seemed waiting in order to attack us. As we perceived only one of the three at first, we despised it, though more numerous than our company, and attacked it accordingly; but while we were engaged with this, the other two which had found means to keep themselves hitherto concealed, rushed upon us, so suddenly, that our valour was of little or no service, and we were under a necessity of yielding to the numbers of the foe. Our lieutenant and two of our men fell on the field, while the two that remained and I were so hemmed in and overpowered, that we were taken prisoners[1]; and while two of their troops conducted us to Leon, the third went and destroyed our retreat, which had been discovered as follows: a peasant of Luceno crossing the forest in his return home, perceived by accident the trap-door of our cavern lifted up, that very day on which thou madest thy escape with the lady; and suspecting that it was the place of our abode, had not courage to go in, but contented himself with taking a good observation of the place, which the better to mark, he cut off with his knife thin slices of bark from the trees at small distances as he went along, until he had got quite out of the wood; then repairing to Leon, imparted his discovery to the corregidor, who receiving it with so much the more joy, as his son had been robbed by our company, assembled three troops in order to apprehend us, and the peasant was their guide.

'My arrival furnished a show for all the inhabitants of Leon: had I been a Portuguese general made prisoner of war, the people could not have been more eager to see me. "Behold (said they), behold the famous captain who was the terror of this country, and who, with his two comrades, deserves to have the flesh torn from his bones with red-hot pincers." Being carried before the corregidor, he began to insult

[1] Lesage accounts for only six robbers: there were originally eight (Book I, Chapter vi, p. 28), and one was killed in the encounter with Don Álvaro de Mello (Book I, Chapter ix, p. 39).

me, saying, "Well, miserable wretch! heaven, wearied with the disorders of thy life, at last resigns thee to my justice." "Sir (replied I), if my crimes are manifold, at least, I cannot reproach myself with the death of your only son, whose life I preserved, for which you owe me some acknowledgement." "Ah miscreant! (cried he) people of thy character are not entitled to the privileges of honour: and even if I had a mind to save thy life, the duty of my office would not allow me." Having spoke to me in this manner, he ordered us to be imprisoned in a dungeon, where he did not let my companions linger long: for they went out in three days, to act their last tragical scene in the market-place. As for me, I remained three whole weeks in jail, imagining that my punishment was deferred in order to make it more terrible; and was in expectation of a death altogether new; when the corregidor ordering me to be brought into his presence, said, "Listen to thy sentence—Thou art free. Had it not been for thee, my only son would have been murdered on the highway. As a father, I was willing to acknowledge this piece of service, but not having it in my power to acquit thee as a judge, I have wrote to court in thy behalf, solicited thy pardon, and obtained it. Thou mayst go then whither thou shalt please. But (added he) take my advice, reflect seriously on thy ill-spent life, and from henceforth quit the profession of robbery."

'I was deeply affected with these words, and took the road of Madrid, resolved to turn over a new leaf, and live honestly in that city. I found my parents were dead, and their effects in the hands of an old relation, who gave me such a faithful account of it, as guardians commonly do; all that I have been able to touch, being no more than three thousand ducats, which in all probability, is not above one-fourth of what is my due. But what course could I take? I should gain nothing by going to law: therefore to avoid idleness, I have purchased the place of an alguazil. My brethren, out of decency, would have

opposed my admission, had they been acquainted with my story, which luckily they were ignorant of, or pretended to be so, which is the same thing; for in that honourable corps it is the business of every individual to conceal his own exploits: thank heaven! not one of us can justly reproach his fellow: so that it may be said of the fraternity, The devil may take the best. Nevertheless, my friend (added Rolando), I will now disclose the bottom of my soul: the profession which I have embraced, is not at all to my liking; it requires a behaviour too delicate and mysterious for me; and whatever tricks we practise, must be very crafty and secret. O how I regret my old profession! I grant, there is more safety in this new employment: but there was more pleasure in the other, and liberty is my delight. In all likelihood I shall get rid of my office, and set out one morning for the mountains at the source of the river Tagus, where I know there is a retreat inhabited by a numerous company, chiefly of Catalonians (that is making their eulogium in one word); if thou wilt accompany me, we will go and increase the number of these great men: I shall be second captain in their company; and will for thy better reception, assure them that I have seen thee ten times engaged by my side; I will extol thy valour to the skies, and say more in thy praise than a general says of an officer whom he wants to promote. I will take care not to mention a word of the trick thou hast played, because it would make them suspicious of thee: the adventure shall therefore be concealed. Well (added he), art thou ready to follow my fortune? I wait for thy reply.'

'So many men, so many minds (said I to Rolando), you are born for hardy deeds, and I for a quiet and easy life.' 'O! I understand you (cried he, interrupting me), the lady whom love persuaded you to rescue, still keeps possession of your heart, and doubtless you lead a happy life with her in Madrid: confess, Mr. Gil Blas, that you have taken lodgings for her, and spend together the pistoles which you carried off

from the subterranean retreat.' I told him that he was mistaken, and that in order to undeceive him, I would, while we should be at dinner, relate the story of the lady: this I did accordingly, and informed him of all that had happened to me, since I quitted the company. Towards the end of our repast, he resumed the subject of the Catalonians, owned that he was determined to join them, and made a new attempt to engage me in the same resolution. But finding that I was not to be persuaded, he darted a fierce look at me, saying in a very serious tone, 'Since thou hast such a grovelling soul as to prefer thy servile condition to the honour of associating with men of courage, I abandon thee to the baseness of thy inclinations: but listen to the words I am about to pronounce, and let them remain engraven on thy memory: forget that thou hast met me to-day, and never talk of me from henceforth: for if ever I shall hear that thou so much as namest me in conversation—thou knowest me—I will say no more.' Having thus expressed himself, he called to pay, discharged the bill, and we got up in order to part.

CHAPTER III

He is dismissed by Don Bernardo de Castil Blazo, and enters into the service of a beau

As we went out of the tavern, and were taking leave of one another, my master happening to pass, saw me, and I perceived, looked hard at the captain, which made me believe that he was surprised to find me acquainted with such a figure. Certain it is, that the appearance of Rolando could not prepossess people in his favour: for he was a very tall fellow with a long visage and hook-nose; and though not ugly, had very much the air of a rank sharper.

I was not deceived in my conjectures; for in the evening, I found Don Bernardo still harping on the

captain's figure, and extremely well disposed to believe all the fine things I could have said of him, had not my mouth been shut. 'Gil Blas (said he), who is that tall spunger in whose company I saw thee to-day?' I replied, 'he is an alguazil'; and thought he would rest satisfied with that answer: but he asked a great many other questions; and as I appeared embarrassed, because I remembered the threat of Rolando, he broke off the conversation abruptly, and went to bed. Next morning, when I had done my duty as usual, instead of six reals, he gave me as many ducats; saying, 'Hold, my friend, here is what I give thee for having served me hitherto: go, and seek for another place, for I cannot put up with a servant who has such honourable acquaintances.' I took it in my head to pretend in my own justification, that my acquaintance with the alguazil was occasioned by my having prescribed for him, while I practised physic at Valladolid. 'Very well (replied my master): that's an ingenious evasion: but thou shouldest have thought of it last night, and not have been so much disconcerted.' 'Sir (added I), I thought it would be imprudent in me to tell it: and that was the cause of my confusion.' 'O! surely (replied he, clapping my shoulders gently) you have been very prudent; I did not think thou hadst been so cunning. Go, child, I have no further occasion for thee.'

I went instantly to inform Melendez of this piece of bad news, who told me for my consolation, that he intended to introduce me into a better family; and accordingly, a few days after, 'Gil Blas, my friend (said he), you don't know what good news I have to tell you; you are going to enjoy the most agreeable post you could desire; for I will settle you with Don Matthias de Silva, a man of the first quality, and one of those young lords who go under the denomination of beaux: he does me the honour to buy cloth of me on trust, indeed; but there is nothing to be lost by people of his rank: for they commonly marry rich heiresses who pay their debts: and even if that should

not happen, a tradesman who understands his business, sells always so dear that he can afford to lose three fourths of his bargain. The steward of Don Matthias is my particular friend. Let us go to him now; he will himself present you to his master; and you may depend upon it, he will for my sake, treat you with uncommon regard.'

In our way to the house of Don Matthias, the merchant said, 'It will not be amiss, I believe, to give you some information of the character of this steward, whose name is Gregorio Rodriguez. Between you and me, he is a man of no family, who finding himself born for business, followed the bent of his genius, and enriched himself with the pillage of two families which he served in the quality of steward. I assure you he has a great deal of vanity, and loves to see the rest of the servants cringe to him. They must address themselves to him first, when they have the least favour to ask of their master, for should it happen, that they obtain it without his interest, he has always expedients in readiness by which it will either be revoked or rendered ineffectual. Remember this, Gil Blas, in the regulation of your conduct: pay your court to Señor Rodriguez, preferably to your master himself, and do all that lies in your power to please him: his friendship will bestead you much; he will pay your wages punctually; and if you are dexterous enough to acquire his confidence, he may give you some pretty bone to pick, out of the number he has in his possession. Don Matthias is a young lord who minds nothing but his pleasure, and would not for the world inform himself of the state of his own affairs. What a glorious family is that for a steward!'

Arriving at the house, we desired to speak with Señor Rodriguez, who, we were told, was in his own apartment; there we found him with a kind of farmer, who had a blue canvas bag full of money, in his hand. The steward, who looked more pale and yellow than a girl weary of celibacy, came towards Melendez with open arms; he, on the other hand, met him in the

same manner, and they embraced one another with demonstrations of friendship, in which there was, at least, as much art as nature. Then my affair coming on the carpet, Rodriguez examined me from head to foot, and told me in a very polite manner, that I was just such a one as Don Matthias wanted, and that he would with pleasure present me to that lord. Upon which, Melendez letting him know how much he was interested in my behalf, and begging that he would favour me with his protection, committed me to his care, and after abundance of compliments, withdrew. He was no sooner gone than Rodriguez said to me, 'I will conduct you to my master as soon as I can dispatch this honest countryman.' Then going to the peasant, and taking hold of the bag, 'Talego[1] (said he), let us see if there be just 500 pistoles here.' Having counted the money and found it right, he gave the farmer a discharge for the sum, and sent him about his business; and putting the pistoles into the bag again, addressed himself to me, saying, 'This is the right time for us to go to the *lever* of my master, who commonly rises about noon. It is near the hour, and I suppose he is up.'

This was the case: we found Don Matthias in his morning-gown, lolling in an easy chair, over an arm of which he had tilted one of his legs, and poised himself by leaning with his body the other way, and rasping tobacco; while he talked to a footman, who for the present did the duty of his valet de chambre. 'My lord (said the steward to him), here is a young man whom I take the liberty to present as one fit to fill the place of the valet whom you dismissed two days ago: Melendez your draper recommends him, assuring me that he is a lad of merit, and I hope your lordship will be very well satisfied with his behaviour.' 'Enough (answered the young lord), since you introduce him to me, I receive him into my service with implicit faith, and make him my valet de chambre. So, that affair is settled: but, Rodriguez (added he), let

[1] *Talego*=a bag, more particularly a money-bag.

us talk of something else: you are come very opportunely; for I was just going to send for you. I have bad news to tell you, my dear Rodriguez! You must know I had ill luck at play last night. Together with a hundred pistoles which I had about me, I have lost two hundred more on my parole; and you know of what importance it is for people of quality to discharge that sort of debts; it is indeed the only kind which we are obliged in point of honour to pay; and we do not give ourselves much concern about the rest: you must therefore find two hundred pistoles immediately, and send them to the Countess of Pedrosa.' 'Sir (said the steward), it is sooner said than done. Where shall I get that sum, to please you? I have not been able to finger one farthing of your tenants, let me threaten as hard as I can; and yet I am obliged to maintain your family in an honourable way, though I sweat blood and water in procuring wherewithal to defray the expense. True, indeed, I have hitherto, thank heaven! made shift: but I am now reduced to such extremity that I know not what saint in heaven to invoke.' 'All these harangues are useless (cried Don Matthias, interrupting him), and you worry me with your reflections. Don't you imagine, Rodriguez, that I will change my disposition, and divert myself with looking into my own affairs. An agreeable amusement, truly, for a man of pleasure like me!' 'Have a little patience (replied the steward), at the rate you go on, I foresee that you will be rid of that care in a very short time.' 'You fatigue me (said the young lord, in a passion), you murder me. Give me leave to ruin myself imperceptibly; I tell you, I want two hundred pistoles; and I must have them.' 'I'll go then (said Rodriguez) and have recourse to the little old man who has already lent you money at high interest.' 'You may, if you please, have recourse to the devil (answered Don Matthias), provided I have the two hundred pistoles, I shall give myself no further trouble about the matter.'

Just as he had pronounced these words in a hasty

and discontented manner, the steward went away, and a young man of quality called Don Antonio Centelles[1] came in. 'What is the matter? (said this last to my master) thou art cloudy, my friend: I perceive indignation in thy countenance. What can have put you into this bad humour? I'll lay a wager, it was the man whom I met going out.' 'Yes (replied Don Matthias), it was my steward: every time he comes to speak with me, I suffer for one quarter of an hour, by his talking about my affairs, and saying that I have quite exhausted my finances. Impertinent beast! he cannot say that he loses by me, I'm sure.' 'Why, child (said Don Antonio), I am in the same condition; having a factor not a whit more reasonable than thy steward: when the rogue, in obedience to my repeated orders, brings money for me, one would think, he gave it out of his own pocket. He overwhelms me with reflections. "Sir (says he), you are undone, your rents are seized." Upon which, I am obliged to cut him short, in order to put an end to his ridiculous discourse.' 'The misfortune is (said Don Matthias), we cannot live without these people, who are necessary evils.' 'They are so (replied Centelles), but hark'ee (added he, laughing with all his might) there's a comical thought come into my head: a most incomparable conception! by which we may convert those scenes which we have with them, into mirth; and divert ourselves with that which now gives us so much uneasiness. Let me demand of thy steward all the money thou shalt have occasion for; while thou dost the same by my manager; then they may moralize as they please, we can hear them with great composure; because thy steward will show me thy accounts, and my factor will entertain thee with mine. I shall hear of nothing but thy profusion, and thou wilt see nothing but mine. This will be admirable sport.'

[1] Possibly a distorted reminiscence of the name Centellas, which occurs in Alonso de Castillo Solórzano's picaresque novel, *La Garduña de Sevilla y anzuelo de bolsas*, Chapter xvi.

A thousand bright strokes succeeded this sally, and mightily diverted the young lords, who conversed together with a great deal of vivacity; until their discourse was interrupted by Gregorio Rodriguez, who returned with a little old man almost quite bald. Don Antonio would have gone away, saying, 'Adieu, Don Matthias, I shall see you by and by: at present, you have, doubtless, some serious affair to discuss with these gentlemen.' 'O, not at all (replied my master), stay, it is no secret. That discreet old person whom you see, is an honest man, who lends me money at the rate of twenty per cent.' 'How! twenty per cent. (cried Centelles, with an air of astonishment). Egad, I congratulate thee upon being in such good hands! I am not so kindly dealt with, and may say that I purchase silver at the price of gold; I commonly borrow at the rate of forty in the hundred.' 'Heavens! what extortion! (exclaimed the old usurer) do these knaves ever think of another world? I am not at all surprised at the hue and cry raised against people who lend upon interest. It is the exorbitant profit which some exact, that ruins our honour and reputation: if all my brethren were like me, we should not be so much reviled; for my sole view in lending, is to befriend my fellow-creatures. Ah! if times were as they have been, I would offer you my purse without interest: and truly, in spite of the present scarcity, I can scarce prevail upon myself to take twenty per cent. But for my part, I believe money has retired again within the bowels of the earth: there is no such thing to be had; for which reason, I am obliged to retrench my benevolence.

'How much do you want?' (added he, addressing himself to my master). 'I must have two hundred pistoles,' (replied Don Matthias). 'Here are four hundred in a bag (said the usurer), you shall have one-half.' So saying, he pulled from under his cloak a blue bag, which seemed to be the very same which the peasant Talego had left with the five hundred pistoles, in the hands of Rodriguez. I soon knew

what to think of the matter, and found that Melendez had not praised the steward's understanding without cause. The old man having emptied the bag on the table, began to count the money; my master was inflamed with desire of possession, at the sight; and struck with the totality of the sum, said to the usurer, 'Señor Descomulgado[1], I have made a very wise reflection, truly! What a fool I am? to borrow no more than what is absolutely necessary to disengage my parole, without considering that I have not a penny in my purse. I shall be obliged to have recourse to you to-morrow; therefore, to spare you the trouble of coming back, I think it will not be amiss to pocket the whole four hundred.' 'My lord (said the usurer), a part of this money was designed for a good licentiate, who has some fat benefices which he charitably employs in persuading young girls to retire from the world, and in furnishing their retreats. But since you have occasion for the whole sum, it is at your service: all that I desire is sufficient security.' 'Oh! as for security (said Rodriguez, interrupting him, and taking a paper out of his pocket), you shall be satisfied: here is an order to be signed by Don Matthias, for five hundred pistoles, upon one of his tenants, called Talego, a rich farmer of Mondéjar.' 'Very well (replied the usurer), I never make many words.' Upon which, the steward presented a pen to his master, who without reading the order, set his name to the bottom, whistling all the while.

This affair being ended, the old man took his leave of my patron, who ran and embraced him, saying, 'Till our next meeting, Señor Usurer, I am wholly yours: I don't know why people of your profession are branded with the name of rogues: for my own part, I think you are very necessary and serviceable to society: you are the consolation of a thousand heirs, and the resource of all those lords whose expense exceeds their income.' 'Thou art in the right (cried Centelles),

[1] *Descomulgado* = excommunicated: the condition of Jews, usurers, and the like.

usurers are very honest people, whom we never can honour enough : I will, in my turn, embrace this gentleman, on account of his twenty per cent.' With these words, he approached and hugged the old man ; and these two beaux, for their diversion, began to push him backward and forward to one another, like a ball between two tennis-players. After he had been tossed to and fro a good while, they let him go with the steward, who was more deserving than he of their embraces, and of something else also.

Rodriguez and his understrapper being gone, Don Matthias sent the half of his pistoles to the Countess of Pedrosa, by the footman who was present, and secured the rest in a long, embroidered, silk purse, which he commonly wore in his pocket. Very well satisfied with seeing himself in cash, he said to Don Antonio, with a gay air, 'What shall we do to-day ? Let us consult about it.' 'You speak like a sensible man (replied Centelles) ; with all my heart : let us deliberate.' While they were considering how to spend the day, two other lords arrived : these were Don Alexo Segiar and Don Fernan de Gamboa, both of them about the age of my master, that is, between eight-and-twenty and thirty. These four cavaliers, at meeting, hugged one another so heartily, that one would have thought they had not met for ten years before ; then Don Fernan, who was a jovial companion, addressing himself to Don Matthias and Don Antonio, said, 'Gentlemen, where do you intend to dine to-day ? If you are not engaged, I'll conduct you to a tavern where you shall drink nectar. I supped there last night, and left it only this morning, between five and six o'clock.' 'Would to heaven (cried my master), that I had done the same : in which case, I should not have lost my money.'

'As for me (said Centelles), I treated myself last night with a new diversion : for I love variety in my pleasures, which alone makes life agreeable. A friend of mine carried me to the house of a farmer of the revenue, a gentleman who does his own business

together with that of the State. There I saw magnificence and taste, the entertainment being elegant enough. But I was mightily diverted with the ridiculous behaviour of the tax-gatherer himself, who, though the most plebeian of his class, assumed the man of quality; and his wife, though horribly ugly, affected the airs of a beauty, and said a thousand silly things, seasoned with the Biscayan accent, which rendered them still more remarkably foolish. Besides, there were at table, four or five children, with their tutor; so that you may easily conceive how I was diverted with this family-supper.'

'And I, gentlemen (said Don Alexo Segiar), supped at the house of Arsenia the actress. We were six in all; Arsenia, Florimonda, with a coquette of her acquaintance, the Marquis of Zeneta, Don Juan de Moncada, and your humble servant. We spent the night in drinking and speaking bawdy. Heavens! what pleasure! 'Tis true, indeed, Arsenia and Florimonda have not much genius, but their wantonness supplies the place of wit. They are merry, brisk, romping creatures, and I love them a thousand times better than your precise women of sense.'

CHAPTER IV

How Gil Blas became acquainted with the valets of the beaux. The admirable secret they imparted to him, of acquiring the reputation of a man of wit, at a small expense; and the singular oath which they obliged him to take

In this manner did these lords continue the conversation, until Don Matthias, whom, in the meantime, I helped to dress, was ready to go abroad. Then he bade me follow him, and all the beaux together set out for the tavern, to which Don Fernan de Gamboa had proposed to conduct them. As I walked in the rear, in company with three other valets (for each of the

cavaliers had one), I observed, not without wonder, that these three domestics copied the air and manner of their respective masters. Having saluted them as their new comrade, they returned the civility, and one among them, after having observed me some minutes, said, 'Brother, I perceive that you have never as yet served a young lord.' 'No, indeed (answered I), it is not long since I came to Madrid.' 'So I suppose, (replied he) you smell strong of the country: you seem timorous and awkward, and there is a stiffness in your behaviour: but, no matter, we will soon polish you, take my word.' 'I am afraid you flatter me' (said I to him). 'Not at all (he replied), if you was the greatest blockhead in the universe, we shall be able to make you pass: you may depend upon it.'

This was enough to make me understand that my confederates were brave lads, and that I could not be in better hands, in order to become a pretty fellow. When we arrived at the tavern, we found an entertainment ready, which Señor Don Fernan had the precaution to bespeak in the morning; our masters sat down to table, and we stood ready to serve them: then they began to talk with such gaiety, that I was delighted to hear them. I was very much diverted with their different characters, thoughts, and expressions; their fire, their sallies of imagination. made me believe them a new species of men! When the dessert was upon the table, we brought in a great number of bottles of the best Spanish wine: and left them, to go and dine by ourselves, in a little hall where the cloth was laid on purpose.

I soon perceived that the knights, my companions, had more merit than I at first imagined: they not only assumed the manners of their masters, but even affected their very language, and these rascals succeeded so well, that (the quality air excepted) there was no difference: I admired their free and easy deportment; was charmed with their wit, and despaired of ever being so agreeable. The valet of Don Fernan (because his master treated ours) performed the honours

of the banquet; and that nothing might be wanting, called the landlord, saying, 'Master Andrés Mantuano, give us ten bottles of your very best wine, and according to custom, add them to my master's bill.' 'With all my heart (replied the landlord), but, Mr. Gaspar, you know that Señor Don Fernan owes me a good many entertainments already; and if by your means I could touch a little money'——'Oh! (said the valet, interrupting him) give yourself no trouble about what he owes you: I'll answer for it: my master's debts are as good as gold: 'tis true indeed, some unmannerly creditors have seized our rents; but we shall obtain a replevy very soon; and then we will discharge your bill without so much as examining the articles.' Mantuano brought the wine, notwithstanding the rents being seized; and we drank it in expectation of the replevy. It was a good jest to see us, every moment, toasting one another, under the surnames of our masters: Don Antonio's valet giving the name of Gamboa to Don Fernan's servant, and Don Fernan's footman honouring Don Antonio's valet with that of Centelles: they called me Silva, and by degrees, we got as drunk under these borrowed names, as our masters to whom they properly belonged.

Though I did not shine so much as my companions, they did not fail to express their approbation of me. 'Silva (said one of the archest among them), we shall make something of thee, my friend: I perceive thou hast a fund of genius, but dost not know how to use it to advantage. The fear of speaking nonsense hinders thee from talking at a venture; and yet, by this alone, a thousand people nowadays acquire the reputation of wits. If thou hast a mind to shine, give the rein to thy vivacity, and indifferently risk every thing that comes uppermost. Thy blunders will pass for a noble boldness; and if, after having uttered a thousand impertinencies, one witticism escapes thee, the silly things will be forgot, the lucky thought will be remembered, and the world will conceive a high opinion of thy merit. This is what our masters prac-

tise with such success ; and what every man must do, who aspires to the reputation of a distinguished wit.'

Besides that I was but too fond of passing for a fine genius, the secret which he had disclosed to me seemed so easy, that I was resolved not to neglect it. I put it instantly to the proof, and the wine I had drunk contributed to its success ; that is, I spoke at random, and had the good fortune to throw out, among a great deal of nonsense, some flashes of wit, by which I acquired great applause. This *coup d'essai* filled me with confidence : I collected all my vivacity to produce some bright sally, and chance befriended me in the attempt.

' Well (said he who spoke to me in the street), don't you begin to get rid of your rust ? Thou hast not been two hours in our company, and art already quite another man. Thou wilt improve visibly everyday. See what it is to serve people of quality : it elevates the mind ; while the being valet to citizens has a quite contrary effect.' ' Doubtless (answered I), and therefore I will henceforth consecrate my service to the nobility.' ' That's nobly said (cried Don Fernan's valet, half-seas over), it does not belong to your citizens to possess such superior geniuses as we are. Come therefore, gentlemen (added he), let us take an oath never to serve such rapscallions, and swear to it by the river Styx.' We laughed heartily at Gaspar's conceit, which we approved of very much, and took the burlesque oath with our glasses in our hands.

Thus we continued at table until our masters were pleased to retire, which was about midnight ; a circumstance which my companions looked upon as an excess of sobriety. 'Tis true, indeed, these young lords left the tavern in such good time, only with a view to visit a famous coquette, who lived in the court-end of the town, and kept open house for your men of pleasure by night as well as by day. She was between thirty and forty years old, still extremely handsome, agreeable, and so consummate in the art of pleasing, that (it was said) she sold the remains of her beauty at

a higher price than that which she received for its first fruits. There were always in her house two or three other courtesans of the first rank, who contributed not a little to the great concourse of lords who frequented it. They went to play in the afternoon, then supped, and spent the night in drinking and making merry. Here our masters stayed till morning, and we also, without feeling the time lie heavy on our hands; for while they diverted themselves with the mistresses, we amused ourselves with the maids; and at last departed all together at break of day, every one going to bed at his own home.

My master, getting up as usual about noon, dressed himself, and went out. I followed him to the house of Don Antonio Centelles, where we found one Don Álvaro de Acuña, an old gentleman, and professed rake. All the young sparks, who had an ambition to become fine gentlemen, put themselves under his tuition; by which they were formed for pleasure, taught to make a figure in the world, and to spend their fortunes with a good grace, he himself being under no apprehension of squandering away his own, which was gone long ago. These three cavaliers having saluted one another, Centelles said to my master, 'Faith, Don Matthias, thou couldst not come at a better time: Don Álvaro is going to carry me to the house of a citizen, who has invited the Marquis of Zeneta and Don Juan de Moncada to dinner, and thou shalt be of the party.' 'What is the name of this citizen?' (said Don Matthias). 'He is called Gregorio de Noriega (replied Don Álvaro); and I will, in two words, give you a character of the man. His father, who is a rich jeweller, having gone abroad to negotiate his affairs, left him the enjoyment of a large income: but Gregorio is a fool, who has a disposition prone to spend his estate, in doing which he affects the beau, and would fain pass for a man of spirit in despite of nature. As he begged me to take him under my direction, I govern him at present; and I can assure you, gentlemen, he is in a fair way; his finances being

pretty well sunk.' 'I don't at all doubt it (cried Centelles): I see him already at the workhouse. Come, Don Matthias, let us make an acquaintance with him, that we may have some share in his ruin.' 'With all my heart (replied my master); I love dearly to see the fortune of these little upstart gentlemen overturned, because they vainly pretend to rival us in splendour. Nothing, for example, ever gave me so much diversion as the misfortune of that publican's son, who was, by his inclination for play, and his vanity in aping the great, obliged to sell all, to his very house.' 'Oh! as for him (said Don Antonio), he deserves no compassion; for he is as great a coxcomb in his adversity as he was in high life.'

Centelles and my master repairing with Don Álvaro to the house of Gregorio de Noriega, Mogicon and I went thither also, both of us ravished to find a feast going forward, and to have an opportunity of contributing, on our parts, to the ruin of a citizen. As we went in, we perceived several people busy in dressing the dinner; and the ragouts they were preparing sent forth a savoury steam, that very much prepossessed the smell in favour of the taste. The Marquis of Zeneta and Don Juan de Moncada arrived, and the entertainer seemed to be a great booby, who attempted in vain to assume the carriage of a beau, being a very bad copy of these excellent originals; or rather a downright simpleton, who affected an air of understanding. Imagine to yourself a man of this character in the midst of five jokers, whose sole aim was to exercise their raillery upon him, and engage him in insupportable expense. 'Gentlemen (said Don Álvaro, after the first compliments), I present to you Señor Gregorio de Noriega, as a complete cavalier. Besides a thousand other excellent qualifications, he possesses an understanding so exquisitely cultivated, that you cannot take him amiss. He is equally strong on all subjects, from the most close and subtle logic down to the art of spelling.' 'Oh! now you flatter me (said the citizen, interrupting him with

a very foolish laugh). Señor Álvaro, I may with more justice return the compliment; for you are, as one may say, a very draw-well of erudition.' 'I had no design (replied Don Álvaro) to fish for such a genteel repartee; but upon my word, gentlemen, Señor Gregorio cannot fail of acquiring great reputation in the world.' 'For my own part (said Don Antonio), what I am most charmed with, and what I greatly prefer to his knowledge in orthography, is the judicious choice he makes of his company: instead of confining himself to the conversation of citizens, he cultivates acquaintance with none but young lords, without giving himself any trouble about the expense attending it. There is in this conduct an elevation of sentiment, and it may be called spending one's money with taste and discernment.'

These ironical praises were followed by a thousand more of the same sort, and poor Gregorio was spared by none of them; each of the beaux, in his turn, breaking his jest, the meaning of which the fool did not perceive. On the contrary, he took everything in a literal sense and appeared very happy in his guests; nay, he seemed even pleased with being turned into ridicule: and, in short, served them as a butt during the whole time of dinner. They stayed with him the remaining part of the day, and all night long; whilst we drank at discretion as well as our masters; and by the time they took leave of the citizen, we were all in an excellent trim.

CHAPTER V

Gil Blas sets up for a man of gallantry, and becomes acquainted with a fine lady

After having refreshed myself with some hours of sleep, I got up in good humour; and remembering the advice I had received from Melendez, went (my master not being yet awake) and presented my respects to the steward, whose vanity seemed not a little flattered

with this instance of my regard. He received me very graciously, and asked if I was not yet familiarized to the way of living practised among young noblemen. I replied, that though it was quite new to me as yet, I did not despair of being reconciled to it in time.

And truly this happened very soon; for my humour and disposition suffered a thorough change. From being sedate and pensive, I became a brisk, blundering coxcomb; and the valet of Don Antonio complimented me on my metamorphosis, saying, that there was now nothing wanting to make me illustrious, but an intrigue; which, he affirmed, was absolutely necessary towards finishing the character of a pretty fellow, all our comrades being beloved by some fair lady, and he alone being in possession of the good graces of no less than two women of quality. I believed the rogue told a lie, and said to him, 'Señor Mogicon, to be sure you are a handsome young fellow, who have a great deal of wit and merit; but I cannot conceive how ladies of quality (especially as you don't live among such) can allow themselves to be charmed by a man of your condition.' 'Why truly (said he) they don't know who I am. I make all my conquests in the dress, and even in the name of my master. I'll tell you how: I dress myself like a young nobleman; I assume his behaviour, and go out to take the air; I ogle all the women I see, until I meet with one who returns the leer: her I follow, and find means to speak with. I call myself Don Antonio de Centelles, and demand an assignation; upon which the lady stands upon ceremony: I press her to comply; she yields, et cetera. By this conduct, my child (added he), I have succeeded in my intrigues, and I advise thee to follow my example.'

I was too ambitious of making a figure not to listen to this advice, and besides felt no aversion to a love-intrigue: I therefore resolved to disguise myself like a young nobleman, and go in quest of amorous adventures; but as I durst not dress myself in our own house, for fear of being observed, I took a rich suit of clothes from my master's wardrobe, and, making it

up into a bundle, carried it to the house of a little barber, a friend of mine, where I thought I could dress and undress with more convenience. There I adorned myself to the best of my power, the barber lending a helping hand, in order to set me off; and when we imagined it was impossible to add anything to my appearance, I walked towards St. Jerome's Meadow; from whence, I was persuaded, I should not return without having found some intrigue to my liking; but before I was obliged to go so far from home, I started one of a very brilliant expectation.

As I was crossing a by-street, I saw a lady richly dressed, and perfectly genteel, come out of a small house, and get into a hackney-coach that stood before the door; upon which, stopping short to gaze, I bowed to her in such a manner, as to inform her that I was not at all disgusted at her appearance; and she, to let me see she deserved my notice still more than I imagined, lifted up her veil for a moment, and presented a most agreeable countenance to my view: meanwhile the coach drove off, and I remained in the street, not a little struck with this apparition. 'What a charming figure! (said I to myself). Bless me! this is just what I wanted to complete my character. If the two ladies who are in love with Mogicon, are as handsome as this, I pronounce him a lucky knave. I should be charmed with my fate, had I such a mistress.'

While I made these reflections, I cast my eyes by accident towards the house from whence I had seen this lovely creature come out, and perceived, at a parlour-window, an old gentlewoman, who beckoned me to come in.

I flew into the house in an instant, and found, in a pretty handsome parlour, this venerable and discreet matron, who, taking me for a marquis at least, saluted me with great respect, saying, 'I don't at all doubt, Señor, that you have conceived a very bad opinion of a woman, who, without being acquainted with you, beckons you into her house: but perhaps you will think more favourably of me, when you shall know that

I don't treat everybody in the same manner. But you, I suppose, are a court-lord.' 'You are not mistaken, my soul (said I, stretching out my right leg, and poising my body on my left hip), I am, without vanity, of one of the best families in Spain.' 'I thought so by your appearance (she replied), and I own I love to oblige people of quality: that is my foible. I observed you through the window, looking very earnestly (as I suppose) at a lady who had just parted from me. Have you a passion for her? tell me sincerely.' 'Upon the faith of a courtier (answered I), she has captivated me. I never saw anything more tempting than that creature. Bring us together, my good mother, and depend upon my acknowledgement; such good offices rendered to us grandees, seldom pass unrecompensed.'

'I have already told you (replied the old gentlewoman), that I am wholly devoted to people of quality, and delight in being useful to them. I admit into my house, for instance, certain ladies, whom the exteriors of virtue hinder from receiving their gallants at home; therefore, I accommodate them with my house, in order to reconcile the warmth of their complexions with the rules of decency.' 'Very well (said I to her), and I suppose you have granted that favour to the lady in question?' 'No (she replied), this lady is a young widow of quality, who wants a lover; but she is so nice in that particular, that I don't know if you yourself will please her, notwithstanding your extraordinary merit: I have already presented to her three stout cavaliers, whom she treated with disdain.' 'Adzooks! my dear (cried I, with an air of assurance), thou hast no more to do, but to put me on the scent. I will give thee a good account of her, believe me. I long to have a *tête-à-tête* with a shy beauty, having never, as yet, met with one of that character.' 'Well (said the old lady), if you come hither to-morrow, about this time, your curiosity may be satisfied.' 'I will not fail (answered I), and we shall see whether or not a young nobleman, such as I, may taste the pleasure of a conquest.'

I returned to the house of the little barber, without desiring any other adventures, but very impatient to see the issue of this. Next day, therefore, having been at great pains to set myself off, I repaired to the old gentlewoman's house, an hour before the appointment. 'Señor (said she), I see you are punctual, and am glad of it: for you will find it well worth your trouble. I have seen your young widow, and have had some discourse with her about you. She has forbidden me to speak; but I have conceived such a friendship for you, that I cannot hold my tongue. You have had the good fortune to make an impression on her heart, and will be happy very soon. Between you and me, the lady is a delicious morsel; her husband lived with her but a very short time; he fleeted away, as it were, like a shadow; so that she is as good as a maiden.' The good matron, doubtless, meant one of those sprightly maidens, who know how to enjoy life without the encumbrance of matrimony.

In a little time, the heroine of the assignation arrived, in a stage-coach, as she had done the day before, adorned with all the pomp of dress. As soon as she appeared in the hall, I began by five or six *à la mode* bows, accompanied with their most fashionable contortions; after which, I approached her with a very familiar air, saying, 'My princess, behold a young nobleman, who is enrapt with your beauty. Your image, since yesterday, has incessantly presented itself to my imagination, and expelled a duchess, who had begun to get footing in my heart.' 'The triumph (answered she, taking off her veil) is too glorious for me, and yet I do not perfectly enjoy it: for you young noblemen are prone to change, and your hearts, they say, more difficult to keep than quicksilver.' 'But, my queen (I replied), let us mind the present only, and let futurity shift for itself: you are handsome, and I amorous; and, if you approve of my passion, let us engage without any further reflection, and embark like sailors, who think only of the pleasures, without perceiving the perils of their voyage.'

So saying, I threw myself, in a transport, at the feet of my nymph, and, the better to imitate the beaux, pressed her, in a petulant manner, to make me happy. She seemed a little moved by my entreaties, but thought it was too soon to yield; therefore, pushing me gently from her, 'Hold (said she), you are too forward, and have the air of a libertine; I am afraid you are no better than a downright rake.' 'O fie, madam! (cried I) sure you cannot hate what all ladies of fashion love: none but tradesmen's wives exclaim against libertinism.' 'You are certainly in the right (she replied), and I cannot resist such a convincing reason. It is in vain, I find, to use grimace with noblemen like you; and the women must advance one-half of the way. Know then your victory (added she, with an appearance of confusion, as if her modesty suffered in the confession); you have inspired me with sentiments which I never felt before, and I want only to know who you are, that I may determine to choose you for my lover. I believe you are a young lord, and, moreover, a man of honour. But of this I am not assured; and howsoever I may be prepossessed in your favour, I am resolved not to bestow my affection on a person unknown.'

It was then that I remembered the expedient of Don Antonio's valet, on the same occasions; and, after his example, having a mind to pass for my master, 'Madam (said I to my widow), I will not refuse to tell you my name, which I need not be ashamed to own; did you never hear of Don Matthias de Silva?' 'Yes (she replied), I have even seen him at the house of a lady, an acquaintance of mine.' Although I was pretty well stocked with impudence, this answer disconcerted me a good deal; however, I recollected myself in an instant, and making an effort of genius, to extricate myself, 'Well, then, my angel (said I), you know a lord whom—I know also. Since you must have it, I am of the same family; his grandfather married my grand-uncle's sister-in-law: so that you see we are very nearly related. My name is Don Caesar, and I

am the only son of the illustrious Don Fernan de Ribera, who was slain fifteen years ago, in a battle that was fought on the frontiers of Portugal. I could describe the action, which was hellishly hot; but that would be losing the precious moments which love prompts us to employ in a more agreeable manner.'

After this discourse, I became more pressing and passionate: but all to little effect; the favours which my goddess bestowed upon me, only serving to make me sigh after those which she refused: but though the barbarous creature got into her coach, that waited at the door, I went home very well satisfied with my good fortune, although I was not yet perfectly happy. If, said I to myself, I have not been able to obtain the height of my wishes, it is, because my princess is a lady of rank and delicacy, who thinks it indecent to yield to my transports, during the first interview. The pride of her birth has retarded my happiness, which, however, is only delayed for a few days. Not but that I had likewise some suspicions, that the whole affair was a well concerted trick. But I loved to consider it in the most favourable point of view, and to preserve the advantageous opinion I had conceived of the lady, with whom I had agreed to meet again next day; the hope of accomplishing my wishes, giving me a taste, by anticipation, of the pleasures I expected to enjoy.

With my fancy full of these smiling images, I returned to the house of my barber, where I changed my dress, and went to wait upon my master, at a tennis-court, where I knew he was. I found him engaged in play, and even perceived that he had been lucky; for he was none of those phlegmatic gamesters, who enrich or ruin themselves, without changing a feature. In his prosperity he was full of insulting raillery; but very morose when fortune declared against him. Leaving the tennis-court in great good humour, he went directly to the Prince's Theatre, and I followed him to the play-house door, where giving me a ducat, 'Here, Gil Blas (said he), since I have

been lucky, thou shalt feel the effects of it; go and enjoy thyself with thy companions, and about midnight come to me at the house of Arsenia, where I am to sup with Don Alexo Segiar.' So saying, he went in, and I remained thinking how I should spend my ducat, according to the intention of the donor. I was not long in suspense; Clarino, Don Alexo's valet, appeared all of a sudden, and I carried him to the next tavern, where we regaled ourselves till twelve o'clock; and from thence repaired together to the house of Arsenia, where he was likewise ordered to rendezvous. A little lackey opened the door, and introduced us into a parlour, where the waiting-women of Arsenia and Florimonda sat together, laughing as if for a wager, while their mistresses entertained our masters above.

The arrival of two merry fellows, who had supped to their satisfaction, could not be disagreeable to chambermaids; especially to those of the actresses: but what was my astonishment, when, in the person of one of them, I beheld my widow! my adorable widow, whom I believed a marchioness, or countess! She seemed no less surprised at seeing her Don Caesar de Ribera, metamorphosed into the valet de chambre of a beau: however, we observed one another, without being disconcerted; and both, at one time, were seized with such a violent inclination to laugh, that we could not help indulging it. After which, Laura (so was my princess called) taking me aside, while Clarino made up to her companion, very graciously presented her hand, saying, softly, 'Take it, Don Caesar: instead of reproaching, let us compliment one another, my friend: you performed your part to admiration; and I did not behave amiss in mine. What say you? confess that you took me for one of those fine ladies of quality, who amuse themselves with intrigues.' ''Tis true, (answered I) but whosoever you are, my queen, I have not changed my sentiments with my dress: I beg you will accept my services, and allow the valet de chambre of Don Matthias, to finish that which Don Caesar had

so happily begun.' 'Yes (said she), I love thee still better in thy own character, than in that of another: thou art just such a man as I am a woman, and that is the strongest approbation I can bestow: I therefore receive thee into the crowd of my adorers: we shall have no more occasion for the ministry of the old woman: for thou mayst come hither with the utmost freedom: we ladies of the stage live without constraint, and helter-skelter with the men. The effects of this communication are sometimes very visible indeed; but the town laughs at them, and our business, thou knowest, is to divert it.'

Here we broke off, because there were others present, and the conversation became general, sprightly, joyous and full of palpable *double entendres*[1]. Every one bore a part; Arsenia's maid in particular, my lovely Laura, shone very much, and showed a great deal more wit than virtue. On the other hand, our masters and the actresses often burst out into long fits of laughter, which we overheard, and from which we concluded that their discourse was much of the same stamp with our own. If all the fine things, which were said that night at Arsenia's, had been committed to writing, they would have composed, I believe, a treatise very instructive for youth. In the meantime, the hour of retreat, that is, the dawn, arrived, and we were obliged to part. Clarino followed Don Alexo, and I went home with Don Matthias.

CHAPTER VI

The conversation of some noblemen, about the players of the prince's company

That day, while my master was dressing, he received a billet from Don Alexo Segiar, desiring his company

[1] *Pleine d'équivoques claires* in the original. The expression used by the translator appears to be an English distortion of *mots à double entente*.

at his house, whither we went, and found with him, the Marquis of Zeneta, and another young nobleman of a good mien, whom I had never seen before. 'Don Matthias (said Segiar to my master, presenting the unknown cavalier), this is Don Pompeio de Castro, a relation of mine, who has been at the court of Portugal[1], almost from his infancy: he arrived at Madrid last night, and will set out to-morrow for Lisbon; so that, as he can spare me only one day, I am resolved to enjoy the precious opportunity, and, in order to make it the more agreeable to him, have called you and the Marquis of Zeneta to my assistance.' Upon this, my master and Don Alexo's kinsman embraced and complimented one another, and I was much pleased with the discourse of Don Pompeio, who seemed to have a great share of judgement and penetration.

Having dined at Segiar's, these noblemen amused themselves at cards, till the hour of going to play; and then went all together to the Prince's Theatre, to see a new tragedy, entitled, *The Queen of Carthage*[2]. After the representation of the piece, they returned, and supped where they had dined: the conversation, at first, turning on the poem they had seen performed, and afterwards upon the actors. 'As for the work itself (cried Don Matthias), I have no great opinion of it; it makes Aeneas still more insipid than he is represented in the Aeneid; but every body must agree it was divinely played. What says Señor Don Pompeio? he does not seem to be of my way of thinking.' 'Gentlemen (said that cavalier smiling), I have perceived you so much charmed with your players, and, in particular, with your actresses, that I ought not to be so bold as to signify my dissent from your opinions.' 'You are much in the right (said Don Alexo, in a jocular manner), your censures will be very

[1] In later editions of the original 'Pologne' is substituted for 'Portugal,' and the change is maintained throughout the recital of Don Pompeio de Castro's adventures.

[2] Possibly a reminiscence of Guillem de Castro's *Dido y Eneas*, published at Valencia in 1625.

unreasonable here; and you ought to show some respect for our actresses before us, who are the trumpets of their reputation. As we drink with them every day, we can do no less than warrant them perfect in their vocation; and even give them certificates, if there be occasion for it.' 'I do not at all doubt it (answered his relation), and I dare say you would do the same for their morals, so much are you their friends.'

'Your comedians at Lisbon (said the Marquis of Zeneta, with a sneer) are, doubtless, much better than ours.' 'Yes, certainly (replied Don Pompeio), at least, there are some of them who have no defect.' 'And these (resumed the marquis) may depend upon your certificate.' 'I have no connexion with them (said Don Pompeio), and as I never enter into their parties of pleasure, can judge of their merit without prejudice. But do you really (added he) think your company so excellent?' 'No, faith! (said the marquis) I believe no such thing; and provided you give me leave to defend a very small number of the players, I will willingly give up all the rest. Won't you allow that she who played the part of Dido, is an admirable actress? Did she not represent that queen with all the dignity and grace which is conformable to the idea we have of her; and did not you admire her art in engaging the mind of the spectator, and making him feel the emotions of all those passions that are expressed? She may be said to be consummately skilled in all the refinements of declamation.' 'I agree (said Don Pompeio) that she knows how to awake and touch the passions of the audience: no player had ever more feeling, and, on the whole, her representation is very fine. But she is far from being a perfect actress. I was shocked with two or three things in her performance. When she would express surprise, she rolls her eyes in such an extravagant manner, as very ill becomes the deportment of a princess. Add to this, that in raising her voice, which is naturally low, she corrupts the sweetness of it, and produces a very disagreeable croaking: besides, in more places

than one, she gave reason to suspect that she did not very well understand her part: but, however, I am inclined to impute this rather to inattention than want of capacity.'

'By what I can see (said Don Matthias to the critic), you will scarce write a panegyric on our actresses.' 'Pardon me (replied Don Pompeio), I can discover great talents through their defects. I own, I was enchanted with that actress, who performed the part of a chambermaid in the interludes[1]: she has a fine genius, treads the stage gracefully, and every witticism she utters, is seasoned with a sarcastic smile, full of charms, which very much enhances the value of what is said. She may, indeed, be blamed for indulging her fire, sometimes, a little too much, and transgressing the bounds of modest assurance. But we must not be too severe; and I could only wish that she would correct one bad habit she has contracted. Oft-times, in the middle of a serious scene, she interrupts the performance all of a sudden, by yielding to a silly desire of laughing, with which she is seized. You'll say she is applauded by the pit, even at these times: there, I own, she is lucky.'

'Well, what do you think of the men? (said the marquis, interrupting him) surely you'll charge them full volley, since you have been so unmerciful to the women.' 'No (said Don Pompeio), I think you have some promising young actors; and am particularly pleased with that fat comedian who acted the part of Dido's prime minister: he repeats very naturally, and declaims just as they do in Portugal[2].' 'If he can

[1] The allusion is to Christine-Antoinette-Charlotte Desmares (1682-1753), a celebrated actress, who was at the height of her fame when the First Part of *Gil Blas* appeared. She retired prematurely from the stage on March 30, 1721.

[2] 'That fat comedian' was Lefranc, sieur de Ponteuil, who had acted much in Poland. Lesage made the passage still more pointed by substituting 'Pologne' for 'Portugal' in later editions of his novel.

please you (said Segiar), you must be charmed with the action of him who played the part of Aeneas. Is not he a great comedian? an original?' 'Very original! (replied the critic) his cadence is quite peculiar, and his tones abundantly shrill: he almost always deserts nature; hurries over the words which contain the sentiment, and places the emphasis where it should not be; making pauses even on articles and conjunctions[1]. He diverted me very much; particularly, when he expressed to his confidant, the violence he did himself, in abandoning the princess: never was grief more comically expressed.' 'Softly, cousin (replied Don Alexo), thou wilt make us believe by and by, that there is not a great deal of taste at the court of Portugal. Dost thou know that the actor of whom we speak, is reckoned a phoenix? Didst thou not hear what claps of applause he obtained? A plain proof that he is far from being contemptible.' 'That is no proof at all (answered Don Pompeio): gentlemen (added he), let us not, I beg of you, lay any stress upon the applause of the pit, which is often bestowed very unseasonably: nay, more seldom on true merit than on false. As Phaedrus observes, by an ingenious fable, which I beg leave to repeat. Here it is:—

'The inhabitants of a certain city being assembled in public, to see pantomimes, there was, among the performers, a favourite actor whom they applauded every moment. This buffoon having a mind to close the scene with a new kind of representation, appeared alone upon a stage, stooped down, covered his head with his cloak, and squeaking like a pig, acquitted himself so well, that the audience actually imagined he had one under his clothes: they ordered him therefore to strip; which he having done, and nothing

[1] The description applies accurately enough to Pierre Trochon, otherwise Beaubourg (1672-1725), whose pompous mannerisms were unfavourably compared with the style of his predecessor, Baron.

appearing, the whole assembly thundered applause. A peasant who happened to be one of the spectators, shocked at these expressions of admiration, cried, "Gentlemen, you have no cause to be charmed with that buffoon, who is not such an exquisite actor as you imagine: I can play the pig better than he, and if you doubt it come hither again to-morrow at this hour." The people prepossessed in favour of their pantomimes, reassembled next day in greater numbers, rather to hiss the peasant than see what he could do. The two rivals appearing on the stage, the buffoon began, and was applauded more than ever: then the countryman stooping in his turn, and muffling his head in his cloak, pinched the ear of a real pig which he held under his arm, and made it squeak most piercingly; nevertheless, the audience gave the preference to the pantomime; and hooted the peasant, who all of a sudden, producing the pig to the spectators, "Gentlemen," said he, "it is not me whom you hiss, but this poor pig himself: such excellent judges you are[1]."'

'Cousin (said Alexo), thy fable is too severe: but notwithstanding thy pig, we will not give up our opinion. Let us change the discourse (added he) I am tired of this subject. So, thou wilt depart to-morrow, in spite of my desire to enjoy thy company a little longer?' 'I wish I could make a longer stay in Madrid (replied his kinsman), but it is not in my power. I have told you already, that I came to the court of Spain, about an affair of State; and at my arrival yesterday, had an audience of the Prime Minister, whom I shall see again to-morrow morning; immediately after which, I shall set out on my return to Lisbon.' 'Thou art become altogether Portuguese (said Segiar), and in all likelihood, wilt never return to live in Madrid.' 'I believe I shall not (answered Don Pompeio): for I am so happy as to be beloved by the King of Portugal; and enjoy a great deal of pleasure

[1] Phaedrus, *Fabulae Aesopiae*, IV, xxxiii.

at his court. But notwithstanding his kindness to me, would you believe that I have been on the point of quitting his dominions for ever?' 'Pray tell us the reason!' (said Don Alexo). 'With all my heart; (answered Don Pompeio) and at the same time, will relate the story of my life.'

CHAPTER VII

The History of Don Pompeio de Castro

Don Alexo (added he) knows that while I was yet a boy, I resolved to carry arms; and that seeing our own country in profound peace, I went to Portugal, from whence I passed over into Africa with the Duke of Braganza, who gave me employment in the army under his command. Being a younger brother of very small fortune, I was under a necessity of signalizing myself in such a manner as to attract the notice of the general; and did my duty so well, that the duke promoted and put me in a condition to serve with honour. After a long war, the issue of which you all know, I attached myself to the court, and the king, upon the recommendation of the general officers, gratified me with a considerable pension. Sensible of this monarch's generosity, I lost no occasion of manifesting my gratitude by my assiduity; and was always in attendance, at those hours in which people are permitted to pay their respects; by which behaviour, I insensibly acquired the love of that prince, who honoured me with new favours.

Having one day distinguished myself at the ring, and a bull-fight that preceded it, the whole court commended my strength and address[1], and when I returned home, loaded with applause, I found a billet

[1] Lesage left this passage unaltered in later editions, forgetting that he had changed the scene from Portugal to Poland, where bull-fighting does not appear to have been popular at any time.

importing, that a lady, the conquest of whom ought to flatter me more than all the honour I had that day acquired, wanted to converse with me; and that I should in the twilight repair to a certain place that was described. This letter gave me more pleasure than all the praise I had received, and I imagined that the person who wrote it must be a lady of the first quality. You may easily guess that I flew to the rendezvous, where an old woman being in waiting, to serve as a guide, introduced me by a little garden-door, into a great house, and shut me in a rich closet, saying, 'Stay here until I inform my mistress of your arrival.' I perceived a great many curious things in this closet, which was enlightened by a great number of wax candles; but my sole view in considering its magnificence, was to confirm myself in the opinion I had already conceived of the lady's rank. If all that I saw seemed to assure me she was a person of the first quality; when she appeared, I was convinced of it, by her noble and majestic air. Nevertheless I was mistaken.

'Señor Cavalier (said she), after the advances I have made, it would be ridiculous to conceal the tender sentiments I have for you; which, however, were not inspired by that merit you have this day shown before the whole court. That only has hastened the discovery: for I have seen you more than once, and inquired into your character, which pleased me so much, that I determined to follow my inclination. Don't imagine,' added she, 'that you have made a conquest of some duchess. I am no other than the widow of a simple officer of the king's guards: but what makes your victory still more glorious, is the preference I give you to one of the greatest lords of the kingdom. The Duke of Almeyda[1] is in love with me, and spares nothing to inflame me with a mutual passion: but hitherto he has been unsuccessful, and I suffer his addresses only through vanity.'

[1] This magnate becomes Prince Radzivil in the revised edition of the original.

Though I found by her discourse that I had to do with a coquette, I thought myself very much obliged to fortune for this adventure: Doña Hortensia (so was the lady called) was still in the prime of youth; and I was dazzled with her beauty: besides, she offered me the possession of a heart which would not yield to the addresses of a duke. What a triumph was this for a young Spanish cavalier! I accordingly threw myself at her feet, thanked her for her goodness, said all that a man of gallantry could utter on such an occasion, and she had reason to be satisfied with the transports of my gratitude. We parted the best friends in the world, after having agreed to see one another every night on which she should be disengaged from the Duke of Almeyda, and this she promised to advertise me of, punctually; in which she did not fail, so that, in a word, I became the Adonis of this new Venus.

But the pleasures of life are far from being eternal! Whatever measures the lady could take to conceal our correspondence from my rival, he did not fail to get notice of the whole of what it was so much our interest to keep from his knowledge. A malcontent chambermaid informed him of the affair; and that lord, naturally generous, but withal haughty, jealous, and passionate, was incensed at my presumption: rage and jealousy took possession of his soul; and following the dictates of his fury, he resolved to avenge himself on me in an infamous manner. One night, while I was with Hortensia, he waited for me at the little garden-door, attended by all his footmen, armed with clubs; and as soon as I came out, making these wretches seize me, ordered them to cudgel me to death. 'Strike (said he), and let the audacious villain perish under your hands; for so I am resolved to punish his insolence.' He had no sooner spoken these words than his people assaulted me all together, and gave me so many blows, that I lay stretched upon the ground without sense or motion. After which, they retired with their master, who had regaled himself with this cruel execution; and I remained as they left me, during the

rest of the night. At break of day some people happened to pass, and perceiving still some life in me, were so charitable as to carry me to the house of a surgeon; luckily my wounds were not mortal, and I fell into the hands of a skilful artist, who made a perfect cure on me in two months: at the end of which time, I repaired again to court, and resumed my former way of living, save that I never went back to Hortensia, who on her part took no step to see me again, because the duke, on these terms, had pardoned her infidelity.

My adventure being universally known, and nobody suspecting my courage, every one was astonished to see me as tranquil as if I had not received an affront: for I imparted my thoughts to no man breathing, and seemed to be void of all resentment; so that people did not know what to think of my feigned insensibility. Some believed that notwithstanding my courage, the rank of my antagonist kept me in awe, and obliged me to digest the injury; others, with more reason, suspected my silence, and looked upon the peaceable appearance I put on, as a deceitful calm. Of this opinion was the king, who did not think me a person that would leave such an outrage unpunished; but believed that I would not fail to revenge myself as soon as I could find a favourable opportunity. That he might know whether or not he guessed my sentiments aright, he called me one day into his closet, where he said, 'Don Pompeio, I know the accident which has happened to you, and am, I confess, surprised at your tranquillity, which must certainly be dissimulation.' 'Sire,' I replied, 'I know not who was the aggressor, having been attacked in the dark by people unknown; so that, I must console myself for the misfortune as well as I can.' 'No, no (said the king), you must not think to dupe me with that evasion which is all dissembled: I have been informed of the whole affair: the Duke of Almeyda has given you a mortal affront. You are a gentleman and a Castilian, and I know what these qualities oblige you to do. You

have formed a resolution to avenge yourself. Communicate your scheme to me. I insist upon it—and don't be afraid that you shall have cause to repent of making me your confident.'

'Since your Majesty (answered I) commands it, I will discover my sentiments. Yes, sir, I intend to take vengeance for the affront I have suffered. Every one who bears the name of a gentleman is accountable for it to his family. You know the unworthy treatment I have received; and I purpose to assassinate the Duke of Almeyda, to revenge myself, in a manner suitable to the offence. I will plunge a poniard in his breast, or shoot him through the head, and escape, if I can, into Spain. This is my design.' 'It is a violent one (said the king), nevertheless, I cannot condemn it, after the cruel outrage which the Duke of Almeyda has committed upon you. He is worthy of the chastisement you reserve for him: but do not execute your enterprise in a hurry. Leave it to me to find out an expedient for bringing you to an accommodation.' 'Ah, sir! (cried I, very much chagrined) why did you oblige me to reveal my secret? What expedient can——' 'If I don't find one to your satisfaction (said he, interrupting me), you may put your resolution in practice. I don't intend to abuse the confidence you have reposed in me, and will by no means betray your honour. So that you may make yourself easy on that score.'

I was greatly at a loss to know in what manner the king pretended to terminate this affair in an amicable manner: and this is the method he took. In a private conversation with the Duke of Almeyda, 'My lord (said he), you have injured Don Pompeio de Castro; and as you are not ignorant of his being a man of illustrious birth, and a gentleman whom I love on account of his faithful services, you ought to give him satisfaction.' 'I am not of a humour to refuse it (answered the duke); if he complains of my wrath, I am ready to do him justice in the field.' 'You must give him another sort of reparation (replied the king),

a Spanish gentleman understands the point of honour too well, to fight openly with a secret assassin. I can give you no other name, and you cannot expiate the indignity of your action, any other way, than by presenting your enemy with a cane, and submitting to a retaliation.' 'O heavens! (cried the duke). What, sir! would you have a man of my rank condescend to humble himself before a simple cavalier, and allow himself to be caned!' 'No (replied the monarch), I will make Don Pompeio promise that he will not strike you. Only ask pardon for the violence you committed, and present him with a cane—that is all I expect of you.' 'And that is too much to expect from me, sir (said the duke, interrupting him hastily); I will rather continue exposed to the secret shafts of his revenge.' 'Your life is dear to me (said the king), and my desire is that this affair may have no bad consequences. To bring it to a conclusion the less disagreeably for you, I will be the only witness to that satisfaction which I insist upon your making to the Spaniard.'

The king had occasion for all his power over the duke, to bring him to this mortifying condescension. However, he succeeded; and afterwards, sending for me, recounted the discourse he had with my enemy, and asked if I would be satisfied with the reparation agreed upon between them. I answered in the affirmative, and gave my word of honour, that far from striking the offender, I would not even accept of the cane he should present to me. Things being regulated in this manner, the duke and I, one day, went at a certain hour to the king, who shutting himself up with us in the closet, 'Come (said he to the duke) acknowledge your fault and deserve to be forgiven.' Upon this, my enemy made his apology, and presented me with the cane which he had in his hand. 'Don Pompeio (said the monarch to me, that instant), take the cane, and let not my presence hinder you from satisfying your injured honour: I acquit you of the promise you made, Not to strike the

duke.' 'No, sir (answered I), it is sufficient that he submits to be beaten; an injured Spaniard asks no more.' 'Well (replied the king), since you are contented with that satisfaction, you may now enjoy the privilege of a regular process: measure your swords, and determine your quarrel like men of honour.' 'It is what I ardently desire! (cried the Duke of Almeyda, with precipitation) and that alone is capable of consoling me for the shameful condescension I have made.'

So saying, he went away full of rage and confusion, and two hours after, sent to let me know that he waited for me in a private place. Thither I repaired, and found that lord in a humour to fight heartily. He was not quite forty, and wanted neither courage nor skill, so that the match was pretty equal. 'Come, Don Pompeio (said he), let us decide our difference here: both of us ought to be exasperated to the highest pitch; you, for the treatment you have received at my hands; and I, for having asked your pardon.' With these words, he drew upon me, so suddenly, that I had no time to make any reply; and pushed with great vigour; but I had the good fortune to parry all his thrusts, and attacked him in my turn: when I found I had to do with an antagonist who knew how to defend, as well as to assault; and I don't know what might have happened, if he had not made a false step in retreating, and fallen backward. I stopped immediately, and bid him get up—and he answered, 'Why do you spare me? I am injured by your pity.' 'I will not wrong my glory so much (said I) as to take the advantage of your misfortune: get up once more and let us fight it out.'

'Don Pompeio (said he, rising) after this instance of your generosity, honour will not permit me to use my sword against you. What would the world say of me should I kill you? I should be looked upon as a coward, who had taken the life of a person who had it in his power to deprive me of mine. I can, therefore, no longer fight against you, and I feel the warm

transports of gratitude succeed those furious emotions which reigned within my breast. Don Pompeio,' added he, 'let our mutual hatred cease. Let us even go farther —and be friends.' 'Ah, my lord,' cried I, 'I embrace the agreeable proposal with joy! I vow the most sincere friendship: and as the first proof, promise never to set foot within the door of Doña Hortensia, even though she should desire to see me.' 'It is I (said he), who must yield that lady to you. You have a juster title to her, since her inclination is fixed upon you.' 'No, no (cried I, interrupting him), you love her, and the favours which she might bestow upon me, would give you pain; I sacrifice them, therefore, to your repose.' 'Ah, too generous Castilian! (replied the duke, locking me in his arms) I am charmed with your sentiments! What remorse do they produce within me! With what grief—with what shame do I reflect on the outrage you received! The satisfaction I gave you in the king's closet, seems now too slight. I will make a better reparation for the injury, and in order to efface the dishonour of it entirely, I offer one of my nieces to you in marriage. She is a rich heiress, not yet fifteen, and still more beautiful than young.'

I made my compliments to the duke, in such expressions of acknowledgement, as the honour of entering into his alliance, inspired; and in a few days, married his niece. The whole court congratulated him on his generosity to a gentleman whom he had covered with ignominy; and my friends rejoiced with me, on the happy conclusion of an adventure which seemed to promise a more melancholy issue. Since that time, gentlemen, I live agreeably at Lisbon, beloved by my wife, of whom I am still fond; the Duke of Almeyda gives me everyday fresh proofs of his friendship; and I dare boast of being pretty well with the King of Portugal. The importance of this my journey to Madrid, which I undertook by his order, being a sufficient evidence of his esteem.

CHAPTER VIII

By what accident Gil Blas was obliged to seek a new place

Such was the story that Don Pompeio recounted, and which the valet of Don Alexo and I overheard, although they had taken the precaution of sending us away before it was begun: but instead of retiring, we stopped at the door which we had left half open, and from thence lost not a word of what was said. After this, the noblemen set in to drinking, but their debauch did not last till day; because Don Pompeio, who was to attend the Prime Minister in the morning, was very desirous of a little rest. Accordingly, the Marquis of Zeneta and my master embracing that cavalier, bid him adieu, and left him with his kinsman.

We went to bed for this time, before morn, and Don Matthias, when he waked, invested me with a new employment. 'Gil Blas (said he), take paper and ink, and write two or three letters which I will dictate; henceforward thou art my secretary.' Good (said I to myself), another addition to my functions: as a lackey, I follow my master everywhere; as a valet de chambre, help him to dress; and write under him as his secretary: heaven be praised! I act, like Hecate, in a threefold capacity[1]. 'Thou dost not know,' added he, 'what I am about; which is briefly this. But be secret—for thy life shall answer it. As I sometimes meet with people who boast of their good fortune in love intrigues; I am resolved, in order to excel them all, to have always in my pocket feigned letters from women, which I will read on such occasions. This will afford me some diversion, and more happy than those of my fellows, who acquire conquests only for the pleasure of making them public, I will

[1] The triple aspect assigned to Hecate in conventional representations is said to typify the three phases of the moon.

publish those which I have not had the trouble to make; but remember to disguise thy hand in such a manner, as that the billets may not appear to be written by the same person.'

Upon this I took paper, pen, and ink, and sat down to obey Don Matthias, who at first dictated a love-letter in these terms:

'You was not to-night at the place of assignation. Ah, Don Matthias! what can you say to justify yourself? How much have I been mistaken, and how well have I been punished for having the vanity to think that you would sacrifice all the amusements and business of the gay world, to the pleasure of seeing Doña Clara de Mendoza.'

The next billet he made me write, was in the name of a lady, who preferred him to a prince; and the last, from one who told him, that, if she was sure of his discretion, she would make a voyage with him to the island of Cythera. He was not satisfied with dictating these fine epistles: he obliged me also to subscribe them with the names of ladies of quality. Upon which I could not help observing, that I thought it a ticklish affair; but he desired me to keep my advice to myself, until he should have occasion to ask it: I was therefore obliged to execute his commands in silence. This being done, he got up, dressed, put the letters in his pocket, and went out; and I followed him to the house of Don Juan de Moncada, who had invited five or six gentlemen of his friends to dinner.

The entertainment was sumptuous, and mirth, the best ingredient in all banquets, reigned during the repast. All the guests contributed to enliven the conversation; some by raillery, and others by recounting exploits of which they themselves were the heroes. My master, unwilling to lose such a fair opportunity of profiting by the letters he had made me write, read them aloud, with such an air of assurance, that (his secretary excepted) everybody seemed to believe them

genuine. Among the gentlemen, before whom he was guilty of this effrontery, there was one Don Lope de Velasco, a very sedate man, who, instead of rejoicing like the rest at the success of the reader, coldly asked, if the conquest of Doña Clara had cost him dear. 'Almost less than nothing (replied Don Matthias): she made all the advances. Having seen me in the park, I happened to please her; upon which I was followed by her order, and, as soon as she learned who I was, she wrote to me, appointing an assignation at her house in the night, when all the family should be a-bed. I obeyed the summons, and was introduced to her apartment. I am too much of a gentleman to tell what followed.'

At this laconic detail the lord of Velasco changed countenance, and it was not difficult to perceive what concern he had in the lady in question. 'All these billets (said he, darting a furious look at my master) are absolutely false, and especially that which you boast of having received from Doña Clara de Mendoza, than whom there is not a more chaste young lady in Spain. A gentleman, no ways your inferior either in birth or personal merit, has done everything in his power, during two whole years, to make an impression on her heart; and scarce has he been able to obtain the most innocent favours, though he has reason to flatter himself, that, if she was capable of granting any other kind of indulgence, it would be to him alone.' 'Hey-day! who says anything to the contrary? (said Don Matthias, with an air of raillery). I agree with you, that she is a lady of honour; and, for my part, I am a young fellow of honour; consequently you ought to believe, that nothing which was not very honourable passed between us.' 'Ah! this is too much (cried Don Lope, interrupting him): jesting apart, you are an impostor. Doña Clara never made an assignation with you at night; and I will not suffer you to blacken her reputation. I shall say no more at present.' Having thus expressed himself, he looked sternly at the whole company, and retired

in such a manner, as to make me believe that this affair would have very bad consequences. My master, who was brave enough for a lord of his character, despising the threats of Don Lope, 'What a fool this is! (cried he, bursting into a fit of laughter): your knights-errant pretended only to maintain the beauty of their mistresses; but he, forsooth, must vindicate the chastity of his. Now this to me seems still more extravagant.'

Velasco's retreat, which was in vain opposed by Moncada, did not at all disturb the banquet: the cavaliers, without taking much notice of it, continued their mirth, and did not part till next morning at five o'clock, when my master and I went home to bed. I was overwhelmed with drowsiness, and hoped to enjoy a good sleep; but I reckoned without my host, or rather without our porter, who came and waked me an hour after, telling me, that there was a young man at the gate, who wanted to speak with me. 'Ah! curse thee for a porter (cried I, yawning), dost thou consider that I have just now got to bed? Tell the young man that I am asleep, and bid him return at another time.' 'He must speak with you instantly (replied he), for he assures me that the affair will admit of no delay.' At these words I got up, and putting on my breeches and doublet only, went to the door, cursing all the way. 'Friend (said I, to the young man who waited for me), let me know, if you please, what pressing affair procures me the honour of seeing you so early in the morning?' 'I have (answered he) a letter for Don Matthias, to be delivered into his own hand. He must read it immediately; for it is of the utmost consequence to him: I beg you will therefore show me into his chamber.' Thinking it treated of some very important affair, I took the liberty of waking my master: 'I ask pardon (said I to him) for interrupting your repose; but the importance——' 'What wouldst thou have?' (cried he hastily): upon which the young man who accompanied me, said, 'My lord, I have a letter for you from Don Lope de

Velasco.' Don Matthias took, opened, and having read it, said to Don Lope's valet, 'Hark'ee, child, I would not get up before noon to make one in the best party of pleasure that ever was proposed; judge then if I shall rise at six o'clock in the morning to fight. Thou mayst tell thy master, if he will be in the same place half an hour after twelve, I will meet him there[1].' So saying, he sank down in his bed, and fell asleep again with great expedition.

Between eleven and twelve he got up, and, dressing with great composure, went out, telling me he would dispense with my attendance; but I was too curious to know the consequence to obey him in this, and therefore walked at some distance behind him to St. Jerome's Meadow, where I perceived Don Lope de Velasco, waiting for him in a resolute manner. The better to observe them, I concealed myself, and, from afar, could see them meet, and begin to fight a moment after. The combat was long, each, in his turn, having pushed his antagonist with great vigour and address: but victory declared for Don Lope, who ran my master through the body, and, leaving him stretched upon the ground, made off, very well satisfied with the vengeance he had taken. I ran up to the unfortunate Don Matthias, whom I found without sense, and almost without life. I was melted at the sight, and could not help shedding tears at a death, of which I had been an involuntary instrument. Notwithstanding my grief, however, I did not forget my own little concerns; but returned home with all haste, where (without speaking a syllable of the matter) I made up a bundle of my clothes, among which I threw, by mistake, some of my master's movables; and when I had carried it to the barber's house, where I had left my intriguing suit, published through the whole city the fatal accident, of which I was witness: I told it to everybody who gave me the hearing, and, in particular, took care to inform Rodriguez of what had

[1] Don Matthias makes the same reply as Don Gabriel Zapata in *Marcos de Obregon*, Relacion I, Descanso i.

happened. He seemed less afflicted with the news than busied about the measures he was to take on this occasion. Having assembled the servants, he ordered them to follow him; and repairing in a body to St. Jerome's Meadow, we took up our master, who, though he still breathed, died in three hours after he was carried to his own house. Thus perished Don Matthias de Silva, for having taken it into his head to read forged love-letters at an unreasonable time.

CHAPTER IX

Of the person in whose service he engaged, after the death of Don Matthias de Silva

A FEW days after the funeral of Don Matthias, all his servants being paid and dismissed, I fixed my abode in the house of the little barber, with whom I began to live in strict friendship; and there I promised myself more pleasure than with Melendez. As I did not want money, I was in no hurry to inquire about a new place: besides, I was become nice on that point, and resolved to serve none but the quality for the future; for which reason I intended to examine narrowly into whatever post should occur, believing that there was none too good for me; so much did I then think the valet of a young nobleman preferable to all others.

In the meantime, until fortune should present such a family as I thought I deserved, I imagined nothing could be more agreeable than to consecrate my leisure to my handsome Laura, whom I had not seen since that night when we were both so pleasantly undeceived. I durst not dress in the suit of Don Caesar de Ribera, which (unless I had assumed it for a disguise) would have made me pass for a downright madman: but my own was still very decent, and being very well equipped in stockings, shoes, and hat, I adjusted myself, with the barber's assistance, in a middle way between Don Caesar and Gil Blas, and in this condition repaired to

Arsenia's house; where, finding Laura alone in the same parlour where I had seen her before, she no sooner perceived me than she cried, 'Ha! are you there? I thought I had lost you. Seven or eight days are passed since I gave you the permission of visiting me: I see you don't abuse the liberties in which the ladies indulge you.'

I excused myself on account of my master's death, and the business in which I had been engaged; and added, in a very polite manner, that even in the midst of all my cares, the fair Laura had still kept possession of my heart. 'Well, then (said she), I will reproach you no more; but own, that I have also thought of you: and as soon as I heard of the misfortune of Don Matthias, formed a project which perhaps will not displease you. Some time ago I heard my mistress say, that she wanted to have a kind of steward in the house; a young man who should understand economy, and keep an exact account of the money disbursed for housekeeping. I have cast my eyes on your lordship, and believe you would not be an improper person for that employment.' 'I perceive (answered I) that I should acquit myself in it to a wonder; for I have read Aristotle's *Economics;* and as to keeping accounts, it is my chief excellence. But, child (added I), there is one objection to my engaging in Arsenia's service.' 'What may that be?' (said Laura). 'I have sworn (I replied) never to serve a plebeian: nay, I have sworn by Styx; and if Jupiter himself durst not violate that oath, judge if a valet ought to regard it.' 'Whom dost thou call plebeians? (said the chambermaid with an air of disdain). Dost thou rank actresses with the wives of counsellors and attorneys? Know, friend, that the ladies of the stage are not only noble but arch-noble, by the alliances they contract with men of quality.'.

'If that be the case, my princess (said I), I may accept of the place for which you have destined me, without derogating from the dignity of my resolution.' 'Certainly (she replied), to pass from the family of a

beau into the service of a theatrical heroine, is still to maintain the same sphere of life; for we rank in all respects with the quality: we keep equipages like them; we live as well; and, at bottom, ought to hold the same esteem in civil life. Really (added she), if we consider a marquis and a player, through the course of a day, we shall find them upon a pretty equal footing; for, granting that the marquis, during three parts of the day, is, by virtue of his blood, superior to the player; the actor, during the remaining part, is raised still more above the marquis by the cue of an emperor or king whom he represents. This, in my opinion, invests us with such nobility and grandeur as at least equals us to the people at court.' 'Oh! truly (I replied) you are, without contradiction, on a level with the courtiers. What the deuce! players, I find, are not such scum as I imagined; and you fire me with inclination to serve such honourable people.' 'Well, then (said she), come back again in two days: I ask no more time to dispose my mistress for thy reception. I will speak to her in thy behalf; and as I have some interest with her, am persuaded that thou wilt be admitted into her service.'

I thanked Laura for her friendship, and assured her that I was penetrated with gratitude, which I expressed with such transports as left her no room to doubt my sincerity. We maintained a pretty long conversation together, and it would have lasted longer, had not a little page come to tell my princess that Arsenia wanted her; upon which we parted. I quitted the house of this actress, in the sweet hope of living in it at my ease, in a very short time; and did not fail to return at the time appointed. 'I was just expecting thee (said Laura), in order to assure thee, that thou art now one of the household: come, follow me, and I will present thee to my mistress.' So saying, she carried me into an apartment, composed of five or six rooms of a floor, each more richly furnished than the other.

Heavens! what luxury and magnificence! I be-

lieved myself in the palace of a vice-queen; or rather thought I saw all the riches in the world amassed together in one place; for there was variety of things produced in different nations; and one might term this apartment the temple of some goddess, to whom every traveller presented an offering of the rarities of his country. I perceived the divinity seated on a large satin couch, charming to the eye, and sleek with the steams of sacrifice: she was in a genteel deshabille, and her fair hands were busy in preparing a new head-dress, in which she was to perform that night. 'Madam (said her maid), here is the housekeeper I mentioned. I can assure you, that you will not find one more for your purpose.' Arsenia looked at me very attentively, and I had the good fortune to please her. 'Aha! Laura, (cried she) there's a pretty young fellow. I foresee that I shall be very well satisfied with him.' Then addressing herself to me, 'Child (said she), I like your appearance, and have but a word to say: if you serve me well, you shall have no cause to complain.' I answered, that my whole study and endeavour should be to please her: and seeing that we were agreed, went to fetch my clothes, and was installed in my new office.

CHAPTER X

Which is as short as the foregoing

It being near play-time, my mistress bid Laura and me follow her to the theatre. We went accordingly to her tiring-room, where she put off her ordinary dress, and took another more magnificent for her appearance on the stage. The curtain being drawn, Laura conducted and sat down by me in a place, where we could both see and hear the actors perfectly well. I was disgusted at the greatest part of them, doubtless because Don Pompeio had prejudiced me against them. Several, however, were very much applauded,

and, among these, even some who put me in mind of the fable of the pig.

Laura told me the names of all the actors and actresses as they presented themselves; and, not contented with this, the satirical baggage described their characters nicely, as they appeared. 'This here (said she) is a noodle. That fellow is a brute: and that minx whom you see, with an air more lewd than engaging, is called Rosarda; a very bad acquisition for the company! she should be enrolled in the troop that is raising by order of the Viceroy of New Spain, to be transported forthwith into America. Observe that luminous constellation advancing: that fair setting sun, known by the name of Castilda: if she had exacted a stone from each of her lovers, as a princess of Egypt is said to have done heretofore, she could have raised a pyramid which would have touched the third heaven.' In short, Laura gave no quarter: her malicious tongue did not even spare her own mistress.

Nevertheless I will confess my weakness: I was charmed with my chambermaid, though her character was not morally good. She satirized so agreeably, that I was even in love with her malice. Between the acts she got up, to go and see if Arsenia wanted her; but instead of returning immediately to her place, she amused herself behind the scenes, in listening to the soft things that were said by the men who flattered her. I followed her, for once, to observe, and perceived that she had a great many acquaintances; having reckoned no less than three actors, who, one after another, stopped to speak with her, and seemed to treat her with great familiarity. This was not at all agreeable to me, who feeling, for the first time, what it was to be jealous, returned to my seat so pensive and melancholy, that Laura observed it as soon as she came back. 'What is the matter with thee, Gil Blas? (said she, with surprise). What gloomy demon has taken possession of thee since I went away? Thou seemest sad and dejected.' 'I have too much reason to be so, my princess (answered

I), you have a little too much vivacity in your behaviour: I have observed you with the actors.' 'A pleasant cause of melancholy, indeed! (said she, laughing). How! does that give thee any uneasiness? Truly thou art a mere novice: but thou wilt see a great many other strange things among us, and must accustom thyself to our easy way of life. Harbour no jealousy, child; for that, among comedians, is looked upon as ridiculous: therefore we have none of it. Fathers, husbands, brothers, uncles, and cousins, with us, are the most complaisant persons on earth, and generally make settlements for their own family.'

After having exhorted me to take umbrage at nothing, but look upon everything with composure, she declared that I was the happy mortal who had found the way to her heart; and assured me, that her love should always rest on me alone. On this assurance, which however I might have distrusted, without the imputation of being too suspicious, I promised never more to be alarmed, and kept my word; for that very evening I saw her in close conversation, and heard her laugh heartily with several different men. When the play was over, we went home with our mistress, where Florimonda soon after arrived, with three old noblemen and an actor, to supper. Besides Laura and me, there were of servants in the house, a cookmaid, a coachman, and a page, who all joined in preparing for supper. The cook, who was no less dexterous than Dame Jacinta, was assisted by the coachman in dressing the victuals; while the chambermaid and page laid the cloth, and I furnished the buffet with the finest plate and several cups of gold, which were offered to the goddesses of the temple. I stored it likewise with bottles of the choicest wines, serving in my own person as cup-bearer to show my mistress that I could turn my hand to everything. The deportment of the actresses during the repast, filled me with admiration: they assumed airs of importance, and imagined themselves women of the first rank. Far from addressing the noblemen with the

title of 'Your Excellency,' they did not even give them that of 'Your Lordship'; but called them simply by their names: true, indeed, these very noblemen had spoiled and made them so vain, by suffering them to be so familiar. As for the actor, he, like a player, used to perform the hero, treated them without ceremony, drank to their health, and maintained (as one may say) the upper end of the table. 'Upon my soul (said I to myself), when Laura demonstrated the equality of the marquis and player in the day-time, she might have added, that they are still more so in the night, since they spend it thus in drinking together.'

Arsenia and Florimonda being naturally wanton, a thousand hardy expressions escaped them, mingled with small favours and toyings, which were exquisitely relished by these old sinners. While my mistress amused the one with a little innocent ribaldry, her friend, sitting between the other two, did not act the Susanna with them. While I was considering this picture, which had but too many charms for a young fellow like me, the dessert was brought in: upon which I set wine and glasses on the table, and went to supper with Laura, who waited for me. 'Well, Gil Blas (said she), what is thy opinion of those noblemen thou hast seen?' 'They are, doubtless (answered I), adorers of Arsenia and Florimonda.' 'No (said she), they are old lechers, who visit coquettes without attaching themselves to them, and ask only small compliances, paying generously for trifling favours they receive. Thank heaven! Florimonda and my mistress are at present without lovers: I mean such lovers as assume the husband, and want to engross all the pleasures of the house, because they support the expense of it. As for my own part, I am very glad it is so; and maintain that a coquette of sense ought to fly these sorts of engagements. Why should she give up her liberty to a master? 'Tis better to acquire an equipage penny by penny, than have one at once at such a price.'

When Laura was in a speaking humour (which was

almost always the case) words cost her nothing. Heaven! what a volubility of tongue was she mistress of! She told me a thousand adventures which had happened to the actresses of the Prince's company; and I concluded from her discourse, that I could not be in a better situation to become perfectly acquainted with vice. I was unhappily of an age when this does not create much horror; and besides, the chambermaid painted these irregularities so artfully, that I beheld only the delicious side of them. She had not time to relate the tenth part of the exploits of the actresses; for she had spoke but three hours, when the noblemen and player withdrew with Florimonda, whom they conducted to her own house.

After they were gone, my mistress giving me money, said, 'There, Gil Blas, are ten pistoles to go to market to-morrow morning: five or six of our gentlemen and ladies are to dine with me, so that you must take care, and have everything in plenty.' 'Madam (answered I), with this sum I'll engage to entertain the whole troop.' 'Friend (replied Arsenia), be so good as to correct your expressions: you must not call them the troop, but the company. We say a troop of thieves, a troop of beggars, and a troop of authors; but learn to say a company of comedians. The corps of actors in Madrid especially, deserve to be called a company[1].' I asked pardon for having used such a disrespectful term, and most humbly begged she would excuse my ignorance; protesting that, for the future, whensoever I should mention the gentlemen actors of Madrid in a collective manner, I would always call them the company.

[1] It was a point of punctilio with the actors of the Comédie Française to speak of themselves as 'la Compagnie.' Lesage here uses for his own purpose a well-known anecdote. The actor Baron was appointed by his fellows to present a petition to the third Achille de Harlay, and began: 'Ma compagnie me députe,' etc. Harlay, who was President of the Paris Parliament, slyly replied: 'Je rendrai compte à ma troupe de ce que vous me demandez au nom de votre compagnie.'

CHAPTER XI

How the players lived together; and their treatment of authors

I WENT to market next morning, in order to begin my office of butler; and as it was a meagre day, bought, by order of my mistress, some good fat pullets, rabbits, partridges, and other wild fowl; for as the gentlemen-players were not altogether satisfied with the behaviour of the Church towards them, they did not think proper to adhere scrupulously to its commandments. I brought home more victuals than would have sufficed twelve honest gentlemen, during three days in carnival-time; so that the cook had work enough for the whole morning. While she prepared the dinner, Arsenia got up, and remained at her toilet till noon, when Señores Rosimiro and Ricardo (two actors) arrived: Constantia and Celinaura (two actresses) came soon after: and at last Florimonda appeared, accompanied by a man who had all the appearance of a finished coxcomb. His hair was tied behind in a very foppish manner, his hat adorned with a plume of green feathers, his breeches smooth and strait, and his shirt, which was very fine, and bordered with a handsome lace, displayed at the slashes of his doublet. His gloves and handkerchief were contained within the hilt of his sword, and he wore his cloak with a grace altogether peculiar.

Though he had a good mien, and was very well made, I no sooner saw him than, remarking in him something singular, I said to myself, 'This gentleman must certainly be an original.' I was not mistaken; for he was a man of a very extraordinary character. As soon as he entered Arsenia's apartment, he ran with open arms, and embraced the actresses and actors, one after another, with gestures still more extravagant than those of the beaux. My opinion was not changed when I heard him speak; for he made

affected pauses, and pronounced his words with great emphasis, accommodating his looks and gestures to the subject. Having asked Laura who that gentleman was, 'I don't wonder (said she) at thy curiosity: it is impossible to see and hear Señor Carlos Alonso de la Ventoleria[1], even for once, without feeling the same emotion. I will describe him to the life. In the first place, he has been a player; but quitted the stage through whim, and now repents in earnest. His black hair, which thou seest, is dyed as well as his eyebrows and whiskers; for he is older than Saturn: but as his parents, when he was born, neglected to have his name inserted in the parish register, he takes the advantage of their omission, and calls himself younger than he is by twenty good years at least. He is, moreover, the most self-conceited man in Spain, though he spent the first sixty years of his life in the grossest ignorance; but in order to become learned, he employed a preceptor, who has taught him to spell in Latin and Greek. Besides, he has got an infinite number of good stories by heart, which he has repeated and vouched for so often, that at length he actually believes them to be true. These he brings into conversation, and one may say, that his wit shines at the expense of his memory. He has the character of being a great actor, and I piously believe it; but nevertheless I will own that he does not please me. I hear him repeat sometimes in company, and, among other faults, think his pronunciation too much affected,

[1] Ventoleria is a caricature of Michel Boyron, otherwise Baron (1653-1729), the Roscius of La Bruyère's *Caractères*. Baron left the stage in 1691, and returned to it nearly thirty years later (April 10, 1720). Some of his fatuous sayings are still remembered: 'Depuis Roscius je ne connais que moi,' and 'La nature donne un César tous les cent ans, et il en faut deux mille pour produire un Baron.' The general estimate of Baron's powers is recorded by Charles de Fieux, Chevalier de Mouhy, in the *Tablettes dramatiques* (Paris, 1752), Part II, p. 3: 'C'est le plus grand Acteur qu'il y ait jamais eu.'

and his voice so quavering that it gives an antic and ridiculous air to his declamation.'

Such was the picture that my sweetheart drew of this honorary stage-player, who was really in his deportment the most haughty mortal I had ever seen. He played the orator too, and did not fail to produce from his budget two or three stories, which he uttered with a studied air of solemnity. On the other hand, the actresses and actors, who did not come there to hold their tongues, were not silent; but began to talk of their absent comrades, not in a very charitable manner indeed: but this must be pardoned in players as well as in authors. The conversation therefore kindling against their neighbours: 'You cannot guess, ladies (said Rosimiro), a new piece of finesse of our dear confederate Cesarino. He this morning purchased silk stockings, ribbons and lace, which he ordered a page to bring to the rehearsal, as if sent by a certain countess.' 'Such a piece of knavery! (said Señor de Ventoleria, with a silly, vain simper) there was no such deceit in my time: we never dreamt of composing such stories: the ladies of quality, indeed, spared us the invention, by making the purchase themselves: it was their fancy.' 'Zooks! (said Ricardo) they have that fancy still; and was I permitted to explain myself—but one must be silent on these sort of adventures, especially when persons of a certain rank are concerned.'

'Gentlemen (said Florimonda, interrupting him), a truce with your intrigues, if you please, they are very well known to all the world, and let us talk of Ismenia. They say that nobleman, who has spent so much money upon her, has left her at last.' 'Yes, truly (cried Constantia), and I'll tell you more; she has lost a little citizen, whom she certainly would have ruined. I know the foundation of the whole affair: her Mercury committed a terrible blunder, by carrying to the nobleman a letter she had written to the citizen, and giving this last the billet intended for the lord.' 'These are great losses, my dear' (replied Flori-

monda). 'O! as for the nobleman (said Constantia), there is no great matter, he had spent almost his whole estate: but the citizen had just begun his career, and had never passed through good hands; which is a thousand pities.'

In this manner they discoursed before dinner, and their conversation turned on the same subjects while they were at table. But as I should never have done, if I undertook to repeat all the expressions full of malice and folly which I heard, I hope the reader will excuse me for suppressing them, in order to describe the reception of a poor devil of an author, who came in towards the end of the repast.

Our page came, and said aloud to his mistress, 'Madam, a man in marvellous foul linen, bedraggled all over, and who, so please you, looks very much like a poet, wants to speak with you!' 'Show him up (answered Arsenia); don't stir, gentlemen, 'tis but an author.' Sure enough it was one whose tragedy had been received, and who brought a part for my mistress. He was called Pedro de Moya, and, as he entered, made five or six profound bows to the company, who neither got up nor returned his compliment. Arsenia only answered his profusion of civility by a slight inclination of her head. He advanced into the room, trembling and confused, and let his gloves and cloak fall; which having taken up, he approached my mistress, and presented to her a paper, with more respect than that of a counsellor, when he delivers a petition to a judge; saying, 'Be so good, madam, as to accept of this part, which I take the liberty to offer.' She received it, in a cold and disdainful manner, without even deigning to answer his compliment.

This, however, did not discourage our author, who making use of the opportunity to distribute the different parts of his play, gave one to Rosimiro, and another to Florimonda, who did not treat him a whit more courteously than Arsenia had done. On the contrary, the player, naturally very obliging, as these gentlemen commonly are, insulted him with the most

cutting raillery, which Pedro de Moya felt, but durst not retort, lest his piece should suffer for his imprudence. He retired, therefore, without speaking, but sensibly touched, as I perceived, with his reception; and I believe that, in the bitterness of his resentment, he did not fail to curse, within himself, the players, as they deserved; and they, when he was gone, began to speak of authors with great respect! 'Señor Pedro de Moya (said Florimonda) did not seem to go away very well satisfied.'

'Pshaw, madam (cried Rosimiro), don't disturb yourself about that: authors are not worth notice; if we should treat them on an equal footing, it would spoil them. I know these sorry gentlemen; they would soon forget themselves. Let us therefore use them like slaves; and we need not fear that we shall tire their patience: for though their displeasure may detach them from us sometimes, the fury of writing will bring them back, and they will think themselves very happy, provided we deign to act their performances.' 'You are in the right (said Arsenia), we only lose those authors whose fortunes we have made: for as soon as we have procured a good settlement for them, idleness takes possession of them, and they work no more. Luckily the company don't break their hearts, and the public is no loser by their sloth.'

These fine observations were much applauded, and it was determined, that authors, notwithstanding the ill-treatment they receive, owed their all to the players, who therefore claimed the superiority over them; and certes they could not despise them more.

CHAPTER XII

Gil Blas acquires the theatrical taste, abandons himself to the pleasures of a comic life, with which, however, he is disgusted in a little time

The company remained at table until the hour arrived of going to the theatre, whither they repaired in a body. I followed, and once more saw the play, which gave me such pleasure, that I resolved to take the same opportunity everyday. In this I did not fail, and insensibly became reconciled to the actors; such is the force of custom: I was particularly charmed with those who ranted and distorted themselves most upon the stage; and was not at all singular in this way of thinking.

The beauty of the performance touched me no less than the manner of representation: I was quite transported with some of them; and among the rest, was prodigiously fond of those where all the cardinals or the twelve peers of France appeared. I remember that in two days, I got by heart a whole comedy, entitled, *The Queen of Flowers.* The Rose, who was queen, had the Violet for a confidante, and the Jasmine for her usher. I thought nothing could be more ingenious than these works, which I imagined did a great deal of honour to the taste of our nation.

I not only adorned my memory with the brightest passages from these dramatic masterpieces; I set about bringing my taste to perfection, which to accomplish, I listened with a greedy attention to all that the players said. If they praised any performance, I esteemed it; and whatsoever met with their disapprobation, was immediately despised by me. I thought they were as skilful in plays, as jewellers are in diamonds. Nevertheless, Pedro de Moya's tragedy had great success, although they had prognosticated its damnation. But even this could not make me suspect their judgement; and I choose rather to believe

that the public wanted common sense, than to doubt of the company's infallibility. I was assured, however, from all quarters, that those new pieces of which the players had no good opinion, were usually very much applauded; and that on the contrary, those which they received with approbation, were commonly hissed by the audience. I was told that it was a maxim with them to judge erroneously of the works that were presented to them; and was informed of a thousand instances where the success belied their determination; but all these proofs were scarce sufficient to disabuse my understanding.

I shall never forget what happened one day, in the first representation of a new comedy, which the players had pronounced cold and tedious, and actually thought unpassable. In these sentiments they performed the first act, that met with great applause, which quite astonished them. The second act was played, and still better received than the first: upon which the actors were confounded. 'How the devil! (said Rosimiro) is it possible that this comedy should take?' At last they acted the third, which gave more pleasure than the two former. 'I can't comprehend the meaning of this! (said Ricardo). We imagined that this piece would not please—yet everybody is charmed with it?' 'Gentlemen (said one of them very plainly), the reason is, because there are a thousand strokes of wit in the performance, which we have not observed.'

I no longer, therefore, looked upon the players as excellent judges, but became a just appraiser of their merit: and indeed, they justified to a tittle all the ridicule they met with from the world: for some of the actors and actresses were giddy with applause: and considering themselves as objects of admiration, thought they bestowed a favour on the public, when they deigned to play. I was shocked at their faults, but unhappily too well pleased with their way of life; so that I plunged into debauchery. How could it be otherwise? Their conversation was pernicious to

youth, and all I saw contributed to corrupt my morals: had I been ignorant of what passed at the houses of Casilda, Constancia, and the other players, that of Arsenia alone was but too capable of undoing me: for besides the old noblemen I mentioned, there came thither, beaux, young heirs whom usurers enabled to spend money, and sometimes also, farmers of the revenue were admitted, who far from being gratified for their presence, as they are in their own assemblies, were obliged to pay through the nose for their reception.

Florimonda, who lived hard by, dined and supped everyday with my mistress; and people were surprised at the friendship that seemed to unite them. It afforded matter of astonishment to see coquettes live together in such good intelligence; and everybody imagined that soon or late, they would quarrel about some gallant. But the world was very much mistaken in these perfect friends, who were joined by the most solid affection. Instead of being jealous of one another, like other women, they lived in common; and choose rather to share the spoils, than foolishly dispute about the inclinations of the men.

Laura, by the example of these illustrious associates, made the best of her youth too: and it was not without reason she had told me that I should see strange things: however, I affected to be quite easy; because I had promised to adopt the unconcern of a player on such occasions; and thus I dissembled for some days, contenting myself with asking the names of the men with whom I found her particularly engaged. She always answered, that it was an uncle or cousin. Heavens, what a crowd of relations she had! Sure, her family was more numerous than that of King Priam: and the jade did not even confine herself to her uncles and cousins; but also went abroad frequently in order to allure strangers, by acting the widow of quality at the house of the old woman whom I mentioned before. In short, Laura (to give the reader a just and precise idea of her) was as young,

as handsome, and as much a coquette as her mistress, who had no other advantage over her than that of diverting the town in public. I was borne down by the torrent for three weeks, during which, I gave myself up to all manner of debauchery: but at the same time, I must observe, in the midst of my pleasures, I was frequently seized with sentiments of remorse that proceeded from my education, and embittered all my enjoyments. Vice could not get the better of these warnings, which augmented in proportion as I became more debauched; and by the effect of a happy disposition, I began to abhor the disorders of a theatrical life. 'Ah, wretch! (said I to myself) is it thus thou fulfillest the expectation of thy family? Was it not enough to cheat it by choosing another employment than that of a tutor? Does thy servile condition hinder thee from living like an honest man? or does it become thee to live among such sinners? some of whom are possessed by envy, rage, and avarice; while others have banished all sense of shame. These are abandoned to intemperance and sloth; and those indulge their pride even to an excess of insolence. I am resolved: and will no longer dwell with the seven deadly sins.'

THE END OF THE THIRD BOOK

BOOK IV

CHAPTER I

Gil Blas being disgusted at the irregularities of the actresses, quits the service of Arsenia, and gets into a more creditable family

A REMNANT of honour and religion, which I did not fail to preserve, amidst such corruption of morals, made me resolve not only to leave Arsenia, but also to break off all correspondence with Laura, whom, however, I could not help loving, though I was sensible of her flagrant infidelity. Happy is he who can thus profit by those moments of reflection that interrupt the pleasures which engross his attention! Early one morning, I bundled up my clothes, and without clearing with Arsenia (who was indeed, little or nothing in my debt), or taking leave of my dear Laura, I quitted the house where I had breathed nothing but the air of debauchery; and I had no sooner performed such a good action than heaven rewarded me for it, by throwing me in the way of the steward of Don Matthias my late master. Having saluted him, he knew me, and stopped to inquire if I was in any service; to which I answered, that I had been about a minute or two out of place: for that after having lived about a month with Arsenia, whose behaviour I did not like, I had left her of my own accord, in order to preserve my innocence. The steward, as if he had been scrupulously religious, approved of my delicacy, and told me that since I was a young man of such honour he would make it his business to settle me in an advantageous place. He performed his promise, and

that very day, introduced me into the service of Don Vincent de Guzman, whose manager was one of his acquaintances.

I could not have got into a better family, and therefore had no cause to be displeased with my situation in the sequel. Don Vincent was a very rich old nobleman, who had lived many years without lawsuit or wife; the physicians having deprived him of his spouse, by endeavouring to free her of a cough, which she might have preserved much longer had she abstained from their prescriptions. Instead of marrying again, he had applied himself wholly to the education of Aurora, his only daughter, who was then going in her six-and-twentieth year, and justly passed for an accomplished young lady: for with an uncommon share of beauty, she had an excellent genius, perfectly well cultivated. Her father, though he was no conjurer, possessed the happy talent of managing his affairs to the best advantage; but had one fault, which, however, is pardonable in old men. He delighted in talking, and above all things, of war and bloodshed. If anybody was so unfortunate as to touch that string in his presence, he instantly set the trumpet to his mouth; and the hearers were very happy if they got off for the relation of two sieges and three battles. As he had spent two-thirds of his life in the army, his memory was an inexhaustible source of different actions, which were not always listened to with the same pleasure that he felt in recounting them. Besides, he stammered in his speech, and was very prolix, which rendered his manner of relating very disagreeable. Otherwise, I never knew a nobleman of a better character. He had a great deal of equanimity, and was neither passionate nor whimsical: a circumstance which I admired very much in a man of quality. Though he was a good economist, he kept an honourable house, his domestics consisting of several footmen, and three women who waited on Aurora. I soon perceived that the steward of Don Matthias had procured a good post for me, and bent

all my endeavours to maintain myself in it: for this purpose, I began by reconnoitring the ground; that is, studying the different humours of everybody in the family; then, regulating my conduct by the observations I made, it was not long before I acquired the goodwill of my master, and all his servants.

When I had been about a month in Don Vincent's family, I thought I perceived that his daughter distinguished me from all the rest of the valets in the house. Always when her eyes were fixed upon me, I remarked a sort of complaisance in her countenance, which I could not observe when she looked at my fellows. Had I not lived among beaux and players, it would never have come into my head to imagine that Aurora could think of me; but I was a good deal spoiled among these gentlemen, who are seldom extremely delicate in their sentiments of the most virtuous ladies. 'If (said I to myself) we may believe those stage-players, they are sometimes benefited by the whims to which women of quality are subject. And how do I know that my mistress is free from such caprice? No! (added I) I cannot believe it. She is not one of those Messalinas, who belying the pride of their birth, humble their affections so unworthily, even to the dust, and dishonour themselves without blushing. But rather, one of those virtuous, though tender, young ladies, who satisfied with the bounds prescribed by honour to their inclinations, make no scruple of inspiring as well as of entertaining a delicate passion, which yields amusement without danger.'

These were my sentiments of my mistress, though I did not know precisely how to interpret her behaviour. In the meantime, as often as she saw me, she did not fail to smile and express joy in her countenance; so that without passing for a fool, any man might have been ensnared by such fair appearances: I therefore could resist them no longer; but concluded that Aurora was strongly captivated with my merit; and looked upon myself as one of those happy domestics whose servitude is sweetened by love. That I might

appear in some measure, less unworthy of the favour which my good fortune had procured for me, I began to take more care of my person than I had ever done before: I spent all the money I had in linen, essences, and pomatums: the first thing I did of a morning was to dress and perfume myself, that I might not appear in deshabille before my mistress; and with this attention to my exterior, and other airs I assumed, in order to please, I flattered myself that my happiness was not far off.

Among Aurora's women there was one called Ortiz, an old gentlewoman who had lived more than twenty years in the family, and nursed Don Vincent's daughter, whom she still served in quality of duenna, though she no longer performed the disagreeable part of that function; but on the contrary, instead of discovering as formerly, the actions of Aurora, her sole business now was to conceal them. One evening, Dame Ortiz, having found an opportunity of speaking to me without being overheard, told me softly, that if I was wise and discreet, I would be in the garden at midnight, where I should be informed of things which I would not be sorry to hear. I answered, squeezing the duenna's hand, that I would not fail to be there; and we parted immediately for fear of being surprised. Heavens! how did the time hang on my hands, from that instant to supper (which in our family was always over in good time), and from thence to my master's going to bed! Everything seemed to drag on with extraordinary slowness; and to crown my chagrin, when Don Vincent retired to his bedchamber, instead of going to rest, he began to fight over again all his campaigns in Portugal, with which he had so often stunned me before. But one thing which he had never done hitherto, he reserved for this evening, was to tell me the names of all the officers who had distinguished themselves in his time, and even to recount their exploits. What did I suffer in hearing him to an end! He left off speaking, however, at last, and got into bed. Upon which, I went into the little

closet where I slept, from whence there was a passage by a pair of back stairs, into the garden, and anointed my whole body with essence; I then put on a clean shirt strongly perfumed, and having neglected nothing which I thought might flatter the passion of my mistress, went directly to the place of assignation.

Not finding Ortiz there, I concluded that, tired with waiting for me, she had returned to her apartment, and that the happy minute was past. I blamed Don Vincent for it, and as I was cursing his campaigns, heard it strike ten. This made me believe that the clock went wrong, for I was persuaded that it was at least an hour past midnight, but I was so happily mistaken, that a good quarter of an hour after this, I heard another clock strike ten again. 'Very well, (said I to myself) I have but two whole hours to dance attendance, and they shall have no cause to complain of my punctuality. What must I do till twelve? Let me take a turn in the garden, and consider the part I am to play, which is a pretty new one to me who am but a novice in the whims of women of quality. I know well enough how to behave with Abigails and actresses; these you accost with a familiar air, and come to the point without ceremony: but we must go another way to work with ladies of fashion: the gallant, I imagine, must be polite, complaisant, tender, and respectful, though not timorous: instead of endeavouring to hasten his own happiness, by the violence of his transports, he ought to lie in wait for the moment of frailty.'

These were my reflections, and this the conduct I proposed to observe with Aurora; representing to myself that in a little time, I should have the pleasure of seeing myself at her feet, and of saying a thousand passionate things to that amiable object. I even recollected all the passages of our theatrical pieces, which might be of service to me, and do me honour during our interview; and by a seasonable application of these, I hoped (after the example of some players whom I knew), to pass for a wit, though I

could only boast of a memory. Absorbed in these reflections which amused my impatience more agreeably than the military stories of my master, I heard the clock strike eleven; upon which, I plunged again into my reverie, sometimes walking, and sometimes sitting in an arbour at the farther end of the garden. The long-expected hour of twelve at last struck, and in a few minutes, Ortiz, as punctual, though less impatient than I, appeared. 'Señor Gil Blas (said she, accosting me), how long have you been here?' I replied, two hours. 'In good sooth (said she, laughing), you are very exact: it is a pleasure to make an assignation with you. True, indeed (continued she, with a serious air), you cannot pay too dear for the happy tidings I have to tell you. My mistress wants to have some private conversation with you. I will say no more. The rest is a secret you must learn from her own mouth. Follow me, and I will conduct you into her apartment.' So saying, the duenna took me by the hand, and led me in a mysterious manner, through a little door, of which she had the key, into the chamber of her mistress.

CHAPTER II

The reception that Gil Blas met with from Aurora, and the conversation that passed between them

I SALUTED Aurora, whom I found in deshabille, in the most respectful manner, and with the best grace I could put on; and she received me with a smiling air, forced me to sit down by her, and bade her ambassadress retire into another room. After this prelude, with which I was not ill-pleased, she addressed herself to me in these words. 'Gil Blas, you must have perceived that I look upon you in a favourable light, and distinguish you from the rest of my father's servants; and even though you may not have observed, by my looks, that I have a regard for you, the step I

have taken this night, will leave you no room to doubt it.'

I gave her no time to proceed, but believing that I ought, as a polite gentleman, to spare her modesty the pain of a more formal explanation, I started up in a transport, and throwing myself at her feet, like a stage hero, who falls on his knees before his princess, cried, in a theatrical tone, 'Ah, madam! can it be possible that Gil Blas, hitherto the football of fortune, and outcast of nature, is so happy as to have inspired you with sentiments——' 'Don't speak so loud (said my mistress, laughing), you will awaken my women, who are asleep in the next room. Get up, take your seat again, and hear me to an end, without interrupting me. Yes, Gil Blas (continued she, resuming her gravity), I am your well-wisher; and, as a proof of my esteem, will impart to you a secret, on which the repose of my life depends: I am in love with a young gentleman of beauty, fortune, and illustrious birth: his name is Don Luis Pacheco; and although I have seen him several times in the Prado and at public shows, I have never spoken to him, am even ignorant of his character, and don't know but he may be a person of bad morals. This is what I want to be informed of; and having occasion for a man to inquire carefully about his reputation, and bring me a faithful account of it, I make choice of you, and believe I run no risk, by entrusting you with this commission, in which, I hope, you will acquit yourself with so much discretion and address, that I shall never repent of having made you my confident.'

Here my mistress left off speaking, in order to know what answer I would make; and I, though at first disconcerted at being so disagreeably undeceived, quickly recollected myself, and surmounting that shame, which is always the concomitant of unsuccessful rashness, expressed so much zeal for the lady's interests, and devoted myself with so much ardour to her service, that, though she might still continue to think that I had foolishly flattered myself with having

made an impression on her heart, she saw very well that I knew how to make amends for my folly. I asked but two days to bring her an account of Don Luis; after which, Dame Ortiz being called in by her mistress, conducted me back into the garden, and left me there, after having said, 'Good night, Gil Blas, I know your punctuality so well, that I need not recommend it to you to be early at the next assignation.'

I returned to my chamber, not without some vexation to find my expectation balked: nevertheless, I was wise enough to reflect, that it became me better to be the confidant than the lover of my mistress. I considered too, that this might turn out to my advantage, as the messengers of love are, usually, well paid for their trouble; and I went to bed, in a full resolution to perform what Aurora desired. With this view, I went abroad next day, and found no difficulty in learning the place of abode of such a noted cavalier as Don Luis. I inquired into his character in the neighbourhood; but those to whom I applied could not fully satisfy my curiosity. This made me repeat my inquiries the following day, when I was more successful. Meeting, by accident, in the street, a young man of my acquaintance, we stopped to chat a little, and, that very instant, a friend of his happening to pass, made up to us, and told his comrade, that he had been just turned away by Don Pacheco, the father of Don Luis, on suspicion of having drunk a cask of wine belonging to his master. I did not lose such a fair opportunity of being informed of everything I wanted to know, and succeeded so well by the questions I asked, that I went home very well satisfied that I was able to keep my word with my mistress. I was to see her again the next night, at the same hour, and in the same manner as at first; but I did not suffer so much disquiet that night, and far from bearing the conversation of my old master with impatience, I introduced the subject of his campaigns, waited for twelve with the utmost tranquillity, and it was not until I had heard the hour repeated by several clocks, that I went

down into the garden, void of essence and perfumes, resolved, for the future, to retrench that extravagance.

I found the most trusty duenna at the rendezvous, and she upbraided me in a satirical manner, for having abated in my diligence. I made no answer, but let her conduct me to the apartment of Aurora, who, as soon as I appeared, asked if I had got good intelligence of Don Luis. 'Yes, madam (said I), and you shall hear it in two words. In the first place I must tell you, that he will set out very soon, on his return to Salamanca, in order to finish his studies. He is a young cavalier of honour and probity, and, being a gentleman and Castilian, his courage is not to be doubted; he has, besides, a great deal of wit, and his behaviour is very agreeable: but that which, perhaps, you will least like in him, is a disposition, too much akin to that of most of our young noblemen, extremely rakish. You must know that, young as he is, he has already two actresses in keeping.' 'Is it possible? (cried Aurora) heavens! what morals! but are you certain, Gil Blas, that he leads such a licentious life?' 'Oh! I don't at all doubt it, madam (I replied); I was informed by a valet, who was turned out of his service, this morning; and servants are commonly very sincere, when they talk of their master's faults: besides, he keeps company with Don Alexo Segiar, Don Antonio Centelles, and Don Fernan de Gamboa; and that, alone, is a sufficient demonstration of his libertinism.' 'Enough, Gil Blas (said my mistress, sighing), on the credit of your report, I will combat my unworthy passion, which, though it has already taken deep root in my heart, I don't despair to overcome. Go (added she, giving me a little purse well replenished), there's something for your trouble; beware of disclosing my secret, and remember that I depend upon your silence.'

I assured my mistress, that she might make herself perfectly easy on that score, for I was the Harpocrates[1] of trusty valets. After this assurance, I with-

[1] Harpocrates, son of Osiris, was the god of silence.

drew, very impatient to know the contents of the purse, in which I found twenty pistoles. This made me believe, that Aurora would have certainly given me more, had I brought her agreeable tidings, since she paid me so handsomely for such a mortifying piece of news: and I repented that I had not imitated the lawyers, who sometimes put a gloss upon the truth, in the practice of their profession; I was sorry for having nipped in the bud an intrigue, the consequence of which might have been very advantageous to me: however, I had the consolation to see myself indemnified for my unseasonable expense in essences and perfumes.

CHAPTER III

The great change that happened in the family of Don Vincent, and the strange resolution with which love inspired the fair Aurora

Soon after this adventure, Señor Don Vincent happened to fall sick; and though he had not been in such an advanced age, the symptoms of his disease were so violent, that we had reason to fear a fatal issue. When he was first seized, two of the most famous physicians of Madrid were sent for. One of them was called Doctor Andros[1], and the other Doctor Oquetos[2], who having examined the patient with great attention, were of opinion, that the humours of his body were in a state of fermentation: but in nothing else could they agree. 'We must make haste (said Andros), and purge off the humours, though they be crude, while they continue in this violent agitation of flux and reflux, lest they settle upon some noble part.'

[1] Andros represents Nicholas Andry de Bois-Regard (1658-1742), author of *Le régime du caresme, considéré par rapport à la nature du corps et des alimens* (Paris, 1710), and other medical treatises.

[2] Oquetos is a caricature of Hecquet, already buriesqued as Sangrado. See Book II, Chapter ii. p. 91, *n.*

Oquetos, on the contrary, maintained, that they ought to wait for the concoction of the humours, before they should employ a cathartic. 'But your method (resumed the first) is directly opposite to that of the prince of medicine: Hippocrates orders cathartics in the very first days of the most ardent fever, and says, in express terms, that we must be ready to purge, when the humours are in the orgasm; that is to say, in a state of fermentation.' 'Oh! there you are mistaken, (replied Oquetos) Hippocrates, by the word "orgasm," does not understand the fermentation, but the concoction of the humours.'

Upon this, the doctors grew passionate: one repeated the Greek text, and quoted all those authors, who had explained it in his way: the other, relying on a Latin translation, pronounced it in a tone still more vociferous. Which of them was in the right? Don Vincent was not the man to decide that question; but seeing himself obliged to choose, bestowed his confidence on him who had dispatched the greatest number of patients; I mean the eldest of the two. Andros, therefore, who was the younger, withdrew, not without darting some strokes of raillery at his senior, on his interpretation of the word 'orgasm.' Oquetos, who remained triumphant, being a man of Doctor Sangrado's principles, began by ordering his patient to be copiously blooded, deferring his cathartic until the humours should be concocted: but death, who, without doubt, was afraid the purgation so sagely delayed would deprive him of his prey, prevented the concoction, and carried my master off. Such was the end of Señor Don Vincent, who lost his life, because his physician did not understand Greek.

Aurora having celebrated her father's funeral, in a manner suitable to his birth, took possession of his estate, and, being now mistress of herself, dismissed some of the domestics, with rewards proportioned to their several services, and, in a little time, retired to a castle, which she had on the banks of the Tagus, between Sacedon and Buendia. I was not only one of

those whom she retained, and carried to the country with her, but also had the good fortune to become a necessary person. Notwithstanding the faithful report I had made to her of Don Luis, she was still in love with that cavalier; or rather, finding herself unable to conquer her passion, she had abandoned herself entirely to it; and being no longer under a necessity of taking precautions to speak with me in private, 'Gil Blas (said she, sighing), I cannot forget Don Luis: in spite of all my efforts to banish him from my thoughts, he is still present in my imagination; not such as thou hast painted him, plunged in all sorts of debauch; but such as I would have him to be, tender, amorous and constant.' So saying, she began to melt, and could not help shedding some tears; which affected me so much, that I could scarce refrain from weeping also: and I could not make my court to her more effectually, than by sympathizing with her sorrow. 'I see thou hast a very tender disposition, my friend (added she, after having dried her fair eyes), and I am so well satisfied with thy zeal, that thou mayst depend upon being well recompensed. Dear Gil Blas, I have more occasion now than ever for thy assistance. I will disclose to thee a design, which at present engrosses me, and which thou wilt (no doubt) pronounce very capricious. Know, that I intend to set out immediately for Salamanca, where I will disguise myself like a cavalier, and, under the name of Don Felix, get acquainted with Pacheco, whose confidence and friendship I will endeavour to acquire: I will often speak to him of Aurora de Guzman, and call myself her cousin; by which means, he will, perhaps, express a desire to see her; and then my expectation will be answered. We will have two different lodgings at Salamanca, in one of which I will pass for Don Felix, in the other for Aurora, and presenting myself to the eyes of Don Luis, sometimes metamorphosed into a man, and sometimes in my own dress, I flatter myself, that I shall, by degrees, accomplish my purpose. I grant (added she), that this is

an extravagant scheme ; but I am hurried away by my passion, and the innocence of my intention makes me insensible of the risk I must run.'

I was very much of Aurora's opinion, with regard to the nature of her design : nevertheless, how imprudent soever I judged it, I took care not to act the pedagogue ; but, on the contrary, began to gild the pill, and undertook to prove, that this mad project was no more than an agreeable frolic, that could have no bad consequence. My mistress was pleased with this construction : for lovers are charmed with flattery, even in their most extravagant fancies. We now, therefore, looked upon this rash enterprise in no other light than that of a comedy, the skilful representation of which, it was our business to concert. Having chosen our actors from the servants of the family ; the parts were distributed, without the least quarrel or disturbance ; because we were not players by profession. It was resolved that Dame Ortiz should act the part of Aurora's aunt, under the name of Doña Ximena de Guzman, attended by a valet and waiting-woman ; and that Aurora, dressed like a cavalier, should entertain me as valet de chambre, together with one of her own maids, in the disguise of a page, to be always about her person. The characters being thus regulated, we returned to Madrid, where we understood Don Luis still was, but that it would not be long before he would set out for Salamanca : upon which we ordered the necessary dresses to be made with all diligence ; and when they were finished, my mistress caused them to be conveniently packed up, until we should find a proper time and place for putting them on. Then leaving the care of her house to the steward, she set out, in a coach drawn by four mules, and took the road to the kingdom of Leon, with all those of her servants, who had parts to act in her performance.

We had already crossed Old Castile, when the axle-tree of the coach gave way, between Ávila and Villaflor, about three or four hundred paces from a castle, which we perceived at the foot of a mountain. As night

approached, we were not a little embarrassed, when a peasant, passing by accident, rid us of our anxiety, by telling us, that the castle which we saw belonged to Doña Elvira, widow of Don Pedro de Pinares, a lady whose character he extolled so much, that my mistress sent me to the castle, to beg a lodging for one night. Elvira did not belie the countryman's report, but received me with great affability, and favoured Aurora's compliment with such an answer as she desired. We repaired immediately to the castle, whither our coach was dragged slowly by the mules, and at the gate met Don Pedro's widow, who came out to receive my mistress. I will pass over in silence the civil things that were said, on both sides, on this occasion, and only observe that Elvira was a lady pretty much advanced in years, but very polite, and understood how to perform the duties of hospitality as well as any woman in the world. She conducted Aurora into a sumptuous apartment, where leaving her to repose a few moments, she came and employed her attention on the most minute things that concerned us. Afterwards, when supper was ready, she ordered the cloth to be laid in Aurora's chamber, where they sat down together at table. Don Pedro's widow was not one of those people who cloud the honour of their entertainments with a pensive and discontented air: she was of a gay disposition, and supported the conversation in an agreeable manner: expressing herself with great dignity and elegance. I admired her understanding, and the delicate turn of her thoughts, which seemed to charm Aurora as well as me. They conceived a friendship for one another, and promised to maintain a correspondence by letters. Our coach could not be refitted till the following day, and as we should run some risk by setting out late, it was determined that we should stay at the castle another night. We, in our turn, were served with a profusion of victuals, and our beds were no less comfortable than our meal.

Next day, my mistress found new charms in the

conversation of Elvira, with whom she dined in a large hall, adorned with several pictures; one of which was remarkable for the beauty and wonderful expression of the figures, though it presented a very tragical scene to the view. A dead cavalier appeared lying on his back, and drowned in his own blood, but seemed still to retain a menacing air, even in death. Near him lay a young lady in another attitude, stretched also upon the ground; a sword was seen plunged in her bosom, and she breathed her last sighs, and fixing her dying eyes upon a young man, who seemed mortally grieved at the loss of her. The painter had likewise drawn another figure, which did not escape my attention: this was an old man of a good mien, who, strongly affected with the objects that struck his view, discovered as much sensibility as the youth. One would have thought that each of them felt the same pangs, at sight of these doleful images, but that each received the impression in a different manner. The old man seemed overwhelmed with the profound sorrow in which he was plunged: but there was fury mixed with the affliction of the youth. The painter had expressed the whole with such strength, that we could scarce withdraw our eyes from the performance. My mistress having asked what story the picture represented, 'Madam (said Elvira), it is a faithful representation of the misfortunes of my family.' This answer excited the curiosity of Aurora, who expressed such an eager inclination to know more, that Don Pedro's widow could not dispense with promising her the satisfaction she desired. This promise, which was made before Ortiz, her two companions and me, detained us all four in the hall after dinner. My mistress would have sent us away, but Elvira perceiving that we longed fervently to hear the explanation of the picture, had the goodness to bid us stay, saying that the story which she was going to relate, was none of those that required secrecy; and immediately began in these words.

CHAPTER IV

The baleful marriage. A Novel[1]

Roger King of Sicily had a brother and a sister: the first, called Mainfroy, revolted against him, and lighted up a dangerous and bloody war in the kingdom; but had the misfortune to lose two battles, and fall into the hands of the king, who contented himself with punishing his rebellion, by depriving him of his liberty. This clemency served only to make Roger pass for a barbarian, in the opinion of one part of his subjects, who said he had only saved his brother's life in order to exercise upon him a slow and inhuman revenge. But all the rest, with more foundation, imputed the harsh treatment that Mainfroy suffered in prison, to his sister Matilda alone: for she had, in effect, always hated the prince, and did not cease persecuting him as long as he lived: but she died soon after him, and her death was looked upon as a just punishment of her unnatural disposition.

Mainfroy having left two sons, as yet in their infancy, Roger wished to get rid of them, fearing that when they should arrive at a more advanced age, the desire of revenging their father would induce them to revive a faction which was not so much quelled, but that it might occasion new troubles in the state. He imparted his design to the Senator Leontio Siffredi, his minister, who to divert him from putting it in execution, undertook the education of Prince Henriquez, the eldest, and advised him to commit the youngest, who was called Don Pedro, to the care of the Constable of Sicily. Roger, persuaded that his nephews would be brought up by these men in that submission

[1] This story is adapted from Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla's play, *Casarse por vengarse.* Lesage's version is the basis of James Thomson's tragedy, *Tancred and Sigismunda,* produced at Drury Lane Theatre in March, 1745.

and duty which they owed to him, left the princes to their conduct, and took upon himself the care of his niece Constance, who was of the same age with Henriquez, and only daughter of the Princess Matilda; he furnished her with women and masters, and spared nothing in her education.

Leontio Siffredi had a castle two short leagues from Palermo, at a place called Belmonte; and there that minister employed himself in rendering Henriquez worthy of mounting one day, the throne of Sicily. He soon observed in that prince such amiable qualities, that he applied himself to the cultivation of them, as closely, as if he had had no children of his own. He was blessed, however, with two daughters; the eldest of whom, called Blanche, younger by a year than the prince, was adorned with the most perfect beauty: the other named Portia, whose birth occasioned her mother's death, was still in the cradle. Blanche, and Prince Henriquez, as soon as they were capable of love, entertained a mutual passion; though they had not the liberty of conversing in private. The prince, however, did not fail to find opportunities sometimes; and knew so well how to profit by these precious moments, that he engaged the daughter of Siffredi to allow him to execute a project he had formed. Just about this time, it happened that Leontio was obliged, by the king's orders, to make a journey into one of the most remote provinces of the island: and during his absence, Henriquez caused an opening to be made in the wall of his apartment, that was contiguous to the chamber of Blanche; supplying it with a sliding partition of wood, that opened and shut, without being perceived; because it was so closely joined to the ceiling, that the eye could not discover the artifice. A skilful architect, whom the prince had made his friend, performed the work with equal diligence and secrecy[1].

Through this passage, the amorous Henriquez intro-

[1] This device had already been utilized by Lesage in the Third Act of *Le Traître puni*, a prose version of Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla's play. *La Traicion busca el castigo.*

duced himself sometimes into the chamber of his mistress: but he did not abuse her favour: for, though she was imprudent enough to allow him a private entrance into her apartment, she did not condescend so far, until he had assured her, that he would never ask anything that innocence could not grant. One night, he found her very uneasy, because she had heard that Roger was very ill, and had sent for Siffredi, as high-chancellor of the kingdom, in order to entrust him with his last will. She represented to herself already, her dear Henriquez on the throne, and being afraid of losing him in that high station, was under the utmost anxiety; and the tears stood in her eyes when he appeared. 'Heavens! you weep, madam: what must I think of that sorrow with which I see you overwhelmed?' 'Sir (replied Blanche), I cannot conceal my alarms: the king your uncle, will soon cease to live, and you will succeed him. When I therefore foresee how far your new greatness will remove you from me, I own, I cannot be unconcerned. A monarch seldom beholds things with a lover's eye, and that which was his utmost ambition while he was a subject, affects him but slightly when he is on the throne. Whether it be an unhappy presage, or reason only that inspires me, I feel my soul agitated with emotions that all my confidence in your goodness cannot assuage; and though I dare not doubt your generosity, I cannot help distrusting my own destiny.' 'Adorable Blanche! (replied the prince) your fears are obliging, and justify my attachment to your charms: but the excess of your doubts, injures my love, and (if I may be allowed to say so) the esteem which you owe me. No! think not that my destiny and yours can ever be separated. Believe rather, that you will always be the object of my happiness and joy. Lay aside your fear, therefore, and let it not disturb such endearing moments.' 'Ah, sir! (answered the daughter of Leontio) as soon as you are crowned, your subjects, perhaps, will demand for your queen, a princess descended from a long race of kings, whose

splendid nuptials may add new realms to yours ; and perhaps, alas ! you will answer their expectation, even at the expense of your inclination.' 'Ha ! why (replied Henriquez, with some warmth), why are you thus prone to torment yourself, by raising such an afflicting image of what will never happen ? Should heaven dispose of the king, my uncle, and make me master of Sicily, I swear that I will espouse you in Palermo, in presence of all my court, and I invoke all that is sacred, to confirm my oath.'

Siffredi's daughter was cheered by the protestations of Henriquez, and the rest of their conversation turned on the king's distemper : on which occasion, Henriquez discovered the goodness of his heart, in lamenting his uncle's fate, with which he had no great reason to be affected : the force of blood, making him regret a prince, by whose death he should acquire a crown. Blanche, as yet, did not know all the misfortunes that threatened her. The Constable of Sicily had met her coming out of her father's apartment, one day when he was at the castle of Belmonte, on some important affairs, was captivated with her beauty, and next day, demanded her in marriage of Siffredi, who consented to the match ; but Roger's distemper intervening, the nuptials were deferred, and Blanche knew nothing of the matter.

One morning, just as Henriquez had done dressing, he was surprised to see Leontio, followed by Blanche, come into his apartment. 'Sir (said that minister to him), the news I bring is afflicting, but the consolation with which they are attended ought to moderate your grief. The king, your uncle, is dead, after having left you heir to his sceptre, and Sicily is subject to your sway. The grandees of the realm, who attend your orders at Palermo, have commissioned me to receive them from your mouth, and I am come, sir, with my daughter, the first of your new subjects, to offer our early and sincere homage.' The prince, who knew very well that Roger had laboured two months, under a disease that gradually consumed him, was not

much surprised at this piece of news; nevertheless, struck with the sudden change of his condition, he felt a thousand confused emotions rise within his breast; and having mused some time, broke silence, by addressing himself to Leontio, in these words; 'Sage Siffredi, I shall always look upon you as my father, glory in regulating my conduct by your counsel, and you shall be as much king in Sicily as I am.' So saying, he advanced to a table, on which there was a standish, and taking a sheet of paper, wrote his name at the bottom of the page. 'What are you about to do, sir?' (said Siffredi to him). 'I am going to manifest my gratitude and esteem' (answered Henriquez), presenting the sheet to Blanche, and saying, 'Receive, madam, this pledge of my faith, and of the empire over my inclinations which I now yield to you.' Blanche took it, blushing, and made this answer to the prince; 'I receive with respect the favours of my king; but I depend upon a father; and I hope your Majesty will not take it ill, that I deposit this paper in his hands, to be used as his prudence shall direct him.'

She accordingly gave the subscription of Henriquez to her father, who then observed what till that moment had escaped his penetration. He discerned the prince's sentiments, and said to him, 'Your Majesty shall have no cause to reproach me; for I will not abuse the confidence——' 'My dear Leontio! (cried Henriquez, interrupting him) don't imagine you can abuse it. Whatever use you shall make of the paper, I will approve of your determination. But go (added he), return to Palermo, order the preparations to be made for my coronation, and tell my subjects, that I will follow you immediately thither, in order to receive their oaths of allegiance, and assure them of my affection.' The minister obeyed his new master's orders, and with his daughter, set out for Palermo.

A few hours after their departure, the prince took the same road, more engrossed by his love, than by the high rank to which he was raised. As soon as he

arrived in the city, he was saluted with innumerable shouts of joy, and amidst the acclamations of his people, entered the palace, where everything was already prepared for the ceremony, and where he found the Princess Constance in deep mourning, and to all appearance, very much affected with Roger's death. As they owed one another a mutual compliment of condolence on the event, they both acquitted themselves very handsomely; but it was more cold on the side of Henriquez, than on that of Constance, who, in spite of the enmity subsisting between their families, could not hate the prince. He placed himself on the throne, and the princess sat on his right hand, in an elbow chair not quite so high. The grandees of the kingdom took their places, each according to his rank: the ceremony began, and Leontio, as high-chancellor of the state, and keeper of the late king's will, opened and read it with an audible voice. This deed contained in substance, that Roger, seeing himself without issue, named the eldest son of Mainfroy for his successor, on condition, that he should espouse the Princess Constance; which if he refused to perform, he should forfeit the crown of Sicily to the Infante Don Pedro, his brother, who should enjoy it on the same terms.

Henriquez was confounded at these words! the restriction gave him incredible pain, which became still more violent, when Leontio, after having read the will, pronounced to the whole assembly, 'My lords, having reported the last intentions of the late king to our new monarch, that generous prince consents to honour his cousin, the Princess Constance, with his hand.' At these words, Henriquez interrupted the chancellor, saying, 'Leontio, remember the writing which Blanche——' 'Sir (said Siffredi with precipitation, before the prince had time to explain himself), here it is. The grandees of the realm (added he, showing the paper to the assembly) will here see by your Majesty's august signature, the esteem you have for the princess, and the deference you pay to the last

will of the deceased king, your uncle. Having spoken these words, he read the deed with which he himself had filled the paper, containing the most solemn engagement to marry Constance, conformable to the intention of Roger. The hall rung with repeated shouts of all present, who cried 'Long live our magnanimous King Henriquez': for, as nobody was ignorant of the aversion which that prince had always manifested for the princess, it was feared, not without reason, that he would revolt against the condition of the will, and, by these means, raise commotions in the kingdom. But the reading of this paper entirely composed the minds of the nobles and people, and excited those general acclamations, which, in secret, tortured the monarch's soul.

Constance, who, both on account of her own glory, and her passion for Henriquez, enjoyed the public satisfaction more than anybody, chose this time to assure him of her gratitude. But the prince, in vain, endeavouring to constrain himself, received her compliment with great affliction, and was, indeed, in such disorder, that he could not even perform what decency required. At last, yielding to the violence of his passion, he approached Siffredi, whom the duty of his office obliged to be pretty near his person, and, with a low voice, said, 'What have you done, Leontio? the subscription, which I put into your daughter's hands, was not intended for this use. You have betrayed——' 'Sir (said Siffredi, interrupting him, in a resolute tone), consider your own glory; if you refuse to follow the will of the king your uncle, you lose the crown of Sicily.' He had no sooner spoken in this manner, than he removed at a greater distance from the king, that he might not have an opportunity to reply. Henriquez remained in the utmost perplexity, and felt himself agitated by contrary emotions. He was incensed against Siffredi, he could not resolve to abandon Blanche: but, distracted between her and the interest of his glory, it was some time before he could come to any resolution. However, he was determined at last,

and thought he had fallen upon a method to preserve the daughter of Siffredi, without renouncing the throne. He feigned submission to the will of Roger, and purposed, while a dispensation for his marriage with his cousin should be soliciting at Rome, to gain the nobles of the realm by his bounty, and establish his power so well, that he should not be obliged to fulfil its conditions.

As soon as he had formed this design, he became more tranquil, and turning to Constance, confirmed to her what the high-chancellor had read before the whole assembly. But in the very moment, when he betrayed himself so far as to plight his troth to her, Blanche arrived in the council-hall. She came thither by her father's command, to pay her respects to the princess, and her ears were struck with the words of Henriquez, at her first entrance. Besides, Leontio, being desirous that she should have no cause to doubt of her misfortune, said, while he presented her to Constance, 'Daughter, do homage to your queen, and wish her all the sweets of a flourishing reign and happy marriage.' This terrible stroke overwhelmed the unfortunate Blanche! in vain she endeavoured to conceal her grief; she blushed and grew pale alternately, and shook through every limb. Nevertheless, the princess had not the least suspicion of the cause, but attributed the disorder in which she paid her compliment, to the perplexity of a young creature bred up in solitude, and altogether unaccustomed to the court. It was quite otherwise with the young king: the sight of Blanche abashed him; and the despair he observed in her eyes, transported him quite beside himself. He did not doubt that judging by appearances, she believed him unfaithful. He would have been less uneasy, could he have spoken to her: but how could he find an opportunity, when all Sicily, as one may say, had its eyes upon him. Besides, the cruel Siffredi deprived him of that hope: for reading the thoughts of these two lovers, in their looks, and willing to prevent the mischief which the

violence of their passion might create in the State, that minister, in an artful manner, carried his daughter out of the assembly, and set out with her, on his return to Belmonte; resolved, for more reasons than one, to have her married as soon as possible.

They were no sooner arrived, than he made her acquainted with all the horror of her fate, by declaring that he had promised her in marriage to the Constable. 'Just heaven! (cried she, in a transport of grief, which her father's presence could not repress) for what direful punishment is the unfortunate Blanche reserved!' Her despair was even so violent, as to suspend all the faculties of her soul. She was seized with a universal chillness, and becoming clay-cold and wan, swooned away in the arms of her father. He was affected with her condition; but, though he shared her affliction with all the tenderness of a parent, his first resolution still remained unshaken. Blanche at length recovered her spirits, more through the exquisite sensation of her grief, than through the water which Siffredi sprinkled on her face; and perceiving, while she opened her languishing eyes, 'Sir (said she, with a feeble voice), I am ashamed that you have seen my weakness; but death, which must soon end my torments, will, in a little time, rid you of an unhappy daughter, who has dared to dispose of her heart without your consent.' 'No, my dear Blanche (replied Leontio), live, and let virtue resume its empire in your breast. The Constable's passion does you honour; he is the most considerable match in the kingdom.' 'I esteem his person and his merit (said Blanche, interrupting him), but, sir, the king had made me hope.' 'Daughter (said Siffredi, cutting her short in his turn), I know all that you can say on that subject. I am not ignorant of your tenderness for the prince, which, at another conjuncture, I should not disapprove. You should even see me eager to ensure you of the hand of Henriquez, if the interest of his glory, and that of the State, did not oblige him to bestow it on Constance. It is on that condition only,

that the late king designed him for his successor; and would you have him prefer you to the crown of Sicily? Believe me, I sympathize with you in the cruel stroke you suffer: but since we cannot withstand the decrees of destiny, make one generous effort. Your glory is concerned, in concealing from the kingdom the vain hope with which you flattered yourself. Your sensibility for the king, may raise reports to your disadvantage; and the only means of preventing them, will be to marry the Constable. In short, Blanche, this is no time to deliberate. The king yields you for a throne, and marries Constance. The Constable has my promise, which I beg you will perform; and if I must use my authority to bring you to this resolution, I order you to comply.'

So saying, he left her to reflect upon what she had heard, hoping, that after having maturely considered the arguments he had used, to support her virtue against her inclination, she would resolve, of herself, to give her hand to the Constable. In this he was not mistaken. But, what pangs did it cost the melancholy Blanche, before she came to that determination! she was in a condition, which, of all others, was most worthy of compassion! Grief for seeing her presages of the infidelity of Henriquez changed into certainty, and for being constrained in losing him, to give herself away to another, whom she could not love, created in her such violent transports of affliction, that every moment was attended with new torture. 'If my misfortune is certain (cried she), how can I resist it without dying? Cruel destiny! why was I fed with the most delicious hope, when I was doomed to such an abyss of misery! And thou, perfidious lover! how durst thou betroth thyself to another, after thou hadst promised eternal fidelity to me? Hast thou so soon forgotten the faith which thou hadst sworn? As a punishment for having so cruelly deceived me, may heaven make the nuptial bed, which thou art going to stain with perjury, not a scene of pleasure, but remorse! may the caresses of Constance convey poison

to thy unfaithful heart ! and may thy marriage be as baleful as mine ! Yes, traitor ! I will espouse the Constable, whom I cannot love, to revenge me upon myself, and punish me, for having so indiscreetly chosen the object of my love. Since my religion forbids me to make an attempt upon my life, the days I have to live shall be nothing else than an unhappy series of troubles and disquiet. If thou still preservest any tenderness for me, thou wilt be mortified at seeing me throw myself into the arms of another ; and if thou hast entirely forgotten me, Sicily, at least, may boast of having produced a woman, who punished herself, for having too simply disposed of her heart.'

In such a situation did this unhappy victim of love and duty pass the night that preceded her marriage with the Constable ; and Siffredi finding her next day ready to comply with his desire, made haste to take the advantage of that favourable disposition. He sent for the Constable to Belmonte that same day, and married him privately to his daughter, in the chapel of the castle. It was not enough to renounce a crown, to lose, for ever, a person whom she loved, and bestow herself upon the object of her hatred, but she was also obliged to dissemble her sentiments before a husband who was inflamed with the most ardent passion for her, and naturally of a jealous disposition. That spouse, charmed with the possession of what he held most dear, was continually in her company, and did not even allow her the sad consolation of bewailing her misfortune in secret. When night approached, the daughter of Leontio felt her affliction redouble : but what were her pangs, when her women, after having undressed her, left her alone with the Constable ! He asked, in a respectful manner, the cause of that sorrow with which she seemed to be depressed ; and Blanche, perplexed by the question, feigned herself indisposed. This deceived her husband at first, but he did not long continue in his mistake : for, as he was really concerned at the condition in which he saw her, and pressed her to go to bed, his entreaties, which she mis-

interpreted, presented such a cruel image to her imagination, that, being unable to contain herself any longer, she gave free vent to her sighs and tears. What a sight was this for a man, who believed himself at the very summit of his happiness! He no longer doubted that the affliction of his wife portended something sinister to his love. Nevertheless, though the knowledge of it threw him into a situation almost as deplorable as that of Blanche, he had such command of himself, that he concealed his suspicions. He redoubled his entreaties, and continued to press his spouse to go to rest, assuring her, that he would not interrupt the repose which she seemed so much to want. He even offered to call her women, if she thought that their assistance could alleviate her indisposition. Blanche, encouraged by this promise, told him, that her present weakness only required a little sleep. He pretended to believe her, and going to bed together, they passed a night very different from those which Cupid and Hymen bestow on two lovers inspired by mutual passion.

While Siffredi's daughter indulged her sorrow, the Constable endeavoured, within himself, to divine the cause that rendered his marriage so unhappy. He concluded, that there was a rival in the case; but was bewildered in his own imagination, when he attempted to discover who that rival was; and the sole result of his conjectures was, that he was the most unhappy of all mankind. He had already spent two-thirds of the night in these agitations, when his ears were struck with a hollow noise; and he was not a little surprised to hear somebody walking softly in the chamber. He believed himself mistaken; for he remembered that he himself had locked the door, after Blanche's women were gone, and drew back the curtain to discover, by the evidence of his eyes, the cause of the noise which he heard: but the light, which had been left in the chimney, was extinguished, and, in a little time, he heard the name of Blanche repeated several times, in a soft and languishing tone. Then his

jealous suspicions were inflamed to fury, and his honour alarmed, obliging him to rise, in order to prevent an affront, or take vengeance for it, he seized his sword, and moved towards the side whence the voice seemed to come. Feeling a naked sword opposed to his own, he advanced, the other retired, he pursued, and the other vanished from his pursuit. In vain did he search for him, who seemed to fly, through all the corners of the room, as much as the darkness would allow; he could not find him; he stopped, listened and heard nothing. All seemed to be enchantment! he went to the door, which he imagined had favoured the flight of the secret enemy of his honour, but he found it fast locked as before. Not being able to comprehend anything of this adventure, he called those of his people, who were nearest, and as he opened the door for that purpose, stood in the passage, and kept himself on his guard, that the person whom he sought might not escape.

Some servants, hearing his repeated cries, came running with lights; upon which he took a candle, and made a new search in the chamber sword in hand; but found nobody, nor the least mark of any person's having been there. He did not even perceive the private door, nor the opening through which there was a passage. He could not, however, blindfold himself, with regard to the circumstances of his misfortune, but remained in a strange confusion of thoughts. Should he have recourse to Blanche, she was too much concerned in the truth, for him to expect an explanation from her. He therefore resolved to go and open his heart to Leontio, after having dismissed his servants, telling them, that he thought he had heard a noise in his chamber, but was mistaken. He met his father-in-law coming out of his apartment, at the disturbance he had heard, and recounted to him what had happened, with all the marks of extreme agitation and profound grief.

Siffredi was surprised at the adventure, which, though it did not seem natural, he, nevertheless, be-

lieved; and thinking that the king's love was capable of anything, was very much afflicted with that consideration. But, far from flattering the jealous suspicions of his son-in-law, he represented to him, with an air of assurance, that the voice, which he thought he heard, and the sword that was opposed to his could be no other than phantoms of an imagination misled by jealousy; for, it was impossible that anybody could have gone into his daughter's chamber; that with regard to the melancholy which he had observed in his wife, it might be occasioned by some indisposition; that honour ought not to be answerable for the vicissitudes of temper; that the change of condition in a girl used to live in solitude, who sees herself on a sudden delivered to a man, whom she has not had time to know and to love, might be the cause of those tears, sighs, and that sharp affliction, of which he complained; that love was not to be kindled in maidens of a noble birth by any other means than time and assiduity; for which reasons, he exhorted him to calm his disquiet, redouble his tenderness and care, in order to dispose Blanche to become more sensible of his merit; and entreated him to return to his chamber, being persuaded that his uneasiness and distrust were injuries done to the virtue of his wife.

The Constable made no answer to the remonstrances of his father-in-law; whether he really began to think that he might have been imposed upon by the disorder of his mind, or judged it a wiser course to dissemble than to undertake, in vain, to convince the old man of an event so void of all probability—he returned to his apartment, lay down by his wife, and tried to obtain, by sleep, some respite from his disquiet. Blanche, on her side, was not less uneasy than he: she had but too well heard that which alarmed her husband, and could not consider as an illusion an adventure, the secret and motives of which she knew. Surprised that Henriquez should seek to introduce himself into her apartment, after having so

solemnly pledged his faith to Constance, instead of approving or feeling the least glimpse of joy at this step, she looked upon it as a new outrage, and her heart was incensed against him.

While the daughter of Siffredi, prejudiced against the young king, believed him the most unfaithful of men, that unhappy prince, more in love than ever, wished for an interview with Blanche, in order to encourage her against the appearances that condemned him. He would have come sooner to Belmonte for that purpose, had he been permitted by the multiplicity of business in which he was necessarily engaged; but he could not steal away from court before that night. He was too well acquainted with all the private corners of a place where he had been educated, to be under any difficulty of getting unseen into Siffredi's castle; and he still kept the key of a private door that belonged to the garden, through which he got into his old apartment, from whence he passed into the chamber of Blanche. You may imagine the astonishment of that prince when he found a man there, and felt a sword opposed to his own. He had wellnigh discovered himself, and punished on the spot the audacious wretch, who durst lift his sacrilegious hand against his lawful king; but the respect he owed to Leontio's daughter, suspended his resentment. He retired in the same manner as he had entered, and, more afflicted than ever, took the road to Palermo; where, arriving some moments before day, he shut himself up in his apartment. But the agitation of his spirits depriving him of rest, he resolved to return to Belmonte; his safety, honour, and, above all, his love, not permitting him to remain longer ignorant of the least circumstance of such a cruel adventure.

It was no sooner day than he commanded his hunting equipage to be got ready, and, under pretence of taking that diversion, rode far into the forest of Belmont, attended by his sportsmen and some courtiers. He followed the chase some time, the better to conceal his design; and when he saw every one eagerly

engaged at the heels of the hounds, he separated himself from them, and, all alone, took his way to Leontio's castle. He was too well acquainted with the paths of the forest to lose himself, and his impatience not permitting him to spare his horse, he in a little time overran the distance that separated him from the object of his love. He was just inventing some plausible pretext to procure for himself a private interview with the daughter of Siffredi, when, crossing a small road that led to one of the park-gates, he perceived hard by two women, sitting in close conversation at the root of a tree. As he did not doubt that these persons belonged to the castle, the sight of them raised within him some emotion: but he was much more transported, when, the women turning towards him at the noise of his horse's feet, he knew one of them to be his dear Blanche, who had escaped from the castle with Nisa, one of her women, who enjoyed the greatest share of her confidence, to bewail her misfortune at full liberty.

He flew—he threw himself headlong (if I may use the expression) at her feet; and perceiving in her eyes all the marks of the most profound affliction, was melted at the sight. 'Fair Blanche (said he), suspend the emotions of your grief: appearances, I confess, represent me guilty to your eyes; but when you are made acquainted with the design which I have formed in your behalf, that which you now look upon as a crime, will appear to you a proof of my innocence and excess of love.' These words, which Henriquez thought capable of moderating, served only to redouble the affliction of Blanche, who would have answered him, had not her voice been choked up with her sighs. The prince, astonished at her disorder, said, 'How, madam, can't I, then, calm your disquiet? By what misfortune have I lost your confidence? I, who hazard my crown, and even my life, to keep myself yours!' 'Twas then that the daughter of Siffredi, making an effort to explain herself, replied, 'Sir, your promises are now unseasonable. Nothing henceforth can bind my

destiny to yours.' 'Ah, Blanche! (said Henriquez, interrupting her with warmth), what cruel words are these I hear! Who dares ravish you from my love? Who dares oppose the fury of a king, who would put all Sicily in flames, rather than suffer you to be torn from his hopes?' 'All your power, sir (answered Siffredi's daughter, in a languishing manner), cannot remove the obstacles by which we are separated. I am the Constable's wife.' 'The Constable's wife!' (cried the prince, staggering backwards, and unable to go on). He was confounded and overwhelmed by this unexpected blow: his strength forsook him, and he dropped down at the root of a tree that grew behind him. Pale, trembling, and depressed, he had nothing free but his eyes, which he fixed upon Blanche, in such a manner as gave her to understand how deeply affected he was with the unhappy tidings she had declared. She, on the other hand, looked upon him with an air which convinced him, that her emotions were little different from those he felt; and these two unfortunate lovers preserved, between them, a silence that had something terrible in it. At length the prince, recollecting himself a little, by an effort of his courage, resumed the discourse, and said to Blanche with a sigh, 'What have you done, madam? Your credulity has ruined me, and undone yourself.'

Blanche, piqued at the prince's seeming to upbraid her, when she thought she had much more cause to complain of him, replied, 'What, sir! do you add dissimulation to infidelity? Would you have me discredit my own eyes and ears, and believe you innocent, in spite of the evidence of my senses? No, sir, I own myself incapable of such an effort of reason.' 'Nevertheless, madam (answered the king), you are imposed upon by these very witnesses which seem so faithful: even they have assisted in betraying you; and that I am innocent and faithful, is no less true than that you are the Constable's wife.' 'How, sir! (said she) did not I hear you confirm to Constance the present of your hand and heart? Have you not assured the

nobles of the kingdom, that you would fulfil the conditions of the late king's will; and has not the princess received the homage of your new subjects, in quality of queen and spouse of Henriquez? Were my eyes then bewitched? Say, say rather, unfaithful prince! that you did not think Blanche ought to balance in your heart the interest of a throne; and, without stooping to feign a passion that you no longer feel, and perhaps never felt, confess that the crown of Sicily appeared to you more fixed with Constance than with Leontio's daughter. You are in the right, sir: a shining throne was no more my due than the heart of a prince, such as you are. I was too vain to pretend to either; but you ought not to have indulged me in my error. You know the alarms I felt on account of losing you; a misfortune that then seemed to me almost inevitable. Why did you encourage me with hope? Would to heaven my fears had not been dissipated! I should have accused fortune, not you; and you would have, at least, preserved my heart, though at the expense of a hand which no other should ever have obtained. It is now no time to justify yourself: I am the Constable's wife; and that I may spare myself the consequence of a conversation that makes my glory blush, give me leave, sir, without failing in that respect which I owe you, to quit the presence of a prince whom I am no longer at liberty to hear.'

So saying, she left Henriquez with as much haste as her present weak condition would allow. 'Stop, madam! (cried he), and do not drive to despair a prince, who will rather overturn that throne, which you upbraid him with having preferred to you, than fulfil the expectation of his new subjects.' 'That sacrifice (said Blanche) is at present vain. While I am married to the Constable, these generous transports will not avail: since I am then no longer at liberty, it is of small importance to me that you reduce Sicily to ashes, or to whom you give your hand. If I have been weak enough to let my heart be surprised, I shall

at least have fortitude enough to stifle its emotions, and let the new king of Sicily see, that the Constable's wife is no longer the love of Prince Henriquez.' When she pronounced these words, being close to the park-gate, she entered it of a sudden with Nisa; and, locking it on the other side, left the prince overwhelmed with sorrow. He could not recover the blow which Blanche had given him, by the account of her marriage. 'Unjust Blanche! (cried he) you have lost all remembrance of our mutual engagement! In spite of our reciprocal vows, we are for ever parted; and the idea which I had cherished of possessing your charms, was no more than a vain illusion. Ah, cruel maid! how dearly did I buy your approbation of my flame!'

Then the image of his rival's happiness presented itself to his fancy, with all the horrors of jealousy; which took such full possession of his soul for some moments, that he was on the point of sacrificing the Constable, and even Siffredi himself, to his resentment. Reason however, by degrees, allayed the violence of his transports: but the impossibility he perceived of banishing from Blanche the impressions she retained of his infidelity, threw him again into despair. He flattered himself with the hopes of effacing them, provided he could converse with her at liberty; for which purpose, judging it necessary to remove the Constable, he resolved to have him apprehended, as a person suspected of designs against the State. He accordingly charged with this office the captain of his guards, who, repairing to Belmonte, secured his person in the twilight, and brought him prisoner to the castle of Palermo.

This incident filled all Belmonte with consternation. Siffredi set out immediately to offer himself to the king, as security for his son-in-law, and to represent the troublesome consequences of such an arrest. The prince, who expected this step of his minister, and who was resolved, at all events, to obtain a free interview with Blanche, before the Constable should be

released, had expressly ordered that no person whatever should speak with him till next day. But Leontio, notwithstanding this order, finding means to get access to the king's chamber, presented himself before him, saying, 'Sir, if a loyal and respectful subject may be allowed to complain of his master, I am come to complain of you to yourself. What crime has my son-in-law committed? Has your Majesty duly reflected on the eternal reproach you have fixed upon my family; and on the consequences of an imprisonment, which may alienate from your service the hearts of those who fill the most important posts of the realm?' 'I have certain intelligence (replied the king), that the Constable carries on a criminal correspondence with the Infante Don Pedro.' 'Criminal correspondence! (cried Leontio, with surprise) do not believe it. Your majesty is imposed upon: treason never entered the family of Siffredi; and the Constable's being my son-in-law, is enough to screen him from all suspicion. The Constable is innocent; but other secret views have induced you to arrest him.'

'Since you talk to me so freely (replied the king), I will speak to you in the same manner. You complain of the Constable's being imprisoned: what! have I not more cause to complain of your cruelty? 'Tis you, barbarous Siffredi! who have robbed me of my quiet, and reduced me, by your officious cares, to a condition that makes me envy the lowest of mankind. But don't flatter yourself that I will enter into your schemes: my marriage with Constance is resolved upon in vain.' 'How, sir! (cried Leontio, trembling), can you refuse to marry the princess, after having flattered her with that hope before your whole people?' 'If I deceive their expectation (replied the king), ascribe it solely to yourself. Why did you lay me under a necessity of promising that which I could not perform? Who compelled you to fill a paper, which I gave your daughter, with the name of Constance? You was not ignorant of my intention.

You tyrannized over the heart of Blanche, in making her marry a man whom she did not love. But what right had you to dispose of mine, in favour of a princess whom I hate? Have you forgot that she is the daughter of that cruel Matilda, who, trampling under her feet all the ties of blood and humanity, made my father breathe his last under all the rigours of captivity? And shall I espouse her? No, Siffredi! lay aside that hope. Before you see the torch of these direful nuptials lighted, you will see all Sicily in flames, and its ashes quenched in blood!'

'What do I hear? (cried Leontio). Ah, sir! what a prospect have you shown me? What terrible threats! But I am unseasonably alarmed (added he, in another tone), you love your subjects too well, to entail upon them such misery. You will not allow yourself to be overcome by love. You will not tarnish your virtues with the weaknesses of ordinary men. If I have bestowed my daughter on the Constable, it was done, sir, with a view of acquiring for your Majesty a valiant subject, who can support with his arm, and the troops which are at his disposal, your interest against that of the Prince Don Pedro. I thought that in attaching him to my family, by such intimate ties—'

'Ha! these are the ties (cried Prince Henriquez), these are the fatal ties that have undone me! Cruel friend! why did you inflict such a heavy stroke upon me? Did I order you to manage my concerns at the expense of my heart? Why did you not leave me to support my rights by myself? Did I want courage to reduce those who should rebel against me? I should have known how to punish the Constable, had he disobeyed me. I know that kings ought not to be tyrants, and that the happiness of their people should be their chief aim; but must they therefore be the slaves of their subjects, and, from the moment that heaven chooses them to govern, lose the right that nature grants to all men, of disposing their affections as they please? Ah! if they must not enjoy the privilege of the lowest class of mortals, take back,

Siffredi, that sovereign power which you would confirm at the expense of my repose.'

'You know very well, sir (replied the minister), that your marriage with the princess was, by the late king, made the condition of your succession to the crown.' 'And what right (answered Henriquez) had he to establish that disposition? Had he received such an unworthy law, when he succeeded his brother King Charles? And how came you to be so weak as to submit to the unjust condition? For a High Chancellor, methinks, you are very ill informed of our customs. In a word, though I have promised my hand to Constance, it was not a voluntary engagement, therefore I do not intend to keep my word; and if Don Pedro, from my refusal, conceives the hope of mounting my throne, without engaging the people in a quarrel, which might cost too much blood, let the sword decide, in single combat, which of us is most worthy to reign.' Leontio, not daring to urge him any further, contented himself with asking, on his knees, the enlargement of his son-in-law, which he obtained. 'Go (said the king to him), return to Belmonte, whither the Constable will soon follow you.' The minister went away, and got back to Belmonte, persuaded that his son-in-law would not be long behind him. But in this he was mistaken: Henriquez resolved to see Blanche that night, and therefore deferred the release of her husband till next day.

Meanwhile the Constable was tortured with the most cruel reflections: his imprisonment had opened his eyes, with regard to the true cause of his misfortune: he therefore abandoned himself entirely to his jealousy; and renouncing the allegiance he had hitherto so commendably preserved, breathed nothing but vengeance. As he concluded that the king would not fail of being with Blanche that night, in order to surprise them together, he begged the governor of the castle of Palermo to let him go out, assuring him that he would return to prison next morning before day.

The governor, who was entirely devoted to him, consented to this the more easily as he knew that Siffredi had already obtained his liberty, and even furnished him with a horse to carry him to Belmonte; where the Constable being arrived, he tied his horse to a tree, entered the park by a little door, of which he had the key, and was so lucky as to get into the castle unperceived. He went straight to the apartment of his wife, and concealing himself in an antechamber behind a screen, which he found there, proposed to observe from thence all that should pass, and to appear suddenly in Blanche's chamber, at the least noise he should hear. While he was in this situation, he saw Nisa come out from her mistress, and retire to the closet where she lay.

Siffredi's daughter, who had easily discerned the motive of her husband's imprisonment, concluded that he would not return that night to Belmonte, although her father had told her the king assured him the Constable would set out soon after him. She did not doubt that Henriquez would take the advantage of that conjuncture to visit and converse with her at liberty; and in this opinion she waited for the prince, in order to reproach him with an action which might have terrible consequences, in regard to her. Accordingly, in a little time after Nisa had withdrawn, the partition opened, and the king came and threw himself at Blanche's feet, saying, 'Madam, do not condemn before you have given me the hearing: if I have ordered the Constable to be imprisoned, consider that it was the only means I had left to justify myself; therefore impute that artifice to yourself alone. Why did you, this morning, refuse to hear me? Alas! to-morrow your husband will be enlarged, and I shall never have an opportunity of speaking to you again. Hear me, then, for this last time: if the loss of you makes me the most forlorn of mankind, at least grant me the melancholy consolation of convincing you, that my infidelity is not the cause of my misfortune; for though I confirmed to Constance the offer of my hand,

it was what I could not dispense with doing, in the situation to which your father had reduced me. There was a necessity for my deceiving the princess, for your interest as well as my own, in order to secure to you the crown as well as the person of your lover. This I flattered myself with accomplishing, and had already taken measures to break that fatal engagement; but you have destroyed my plan, and, by giving yourself away too inconsiderately, laid up a fund of eternal sorrow for two hearts, which might have been rendered happy by the most inviolable love!'

He ended this complaint with such visible marks of real despair, that Blanche was touched with his condition, and no longer doubted his innocence, which at first gave her some joy; but afterwards, stung with the consideration of her misfortune; 'Ah, sir! (said she to the prince) after the cruel determination of our fate, you increase my affliction by letting me know that you were not guilty! What have I done? Unfortunate that I am! my resentment has betrayed me! I thought myself abandoned, and in revenge accepted the Constable's hand, which was presented by my father! I am guilty of the crime, and have been the cause of our mutual mishap! Alas! while I accused you of having deceived me, it was I, too credulous lover! it was I who broke those bonds which I had sworn to keep for ever inviolate! Revenge yourself, sir, in your turn! Hate the ungrateful Blanche! forget her!' 'Ah, madam! (said Henriquez, interrupting her with a melancholy air) how shall I find means to tear from my heart a passion, which even your injustice cannot extinguish?' 'You must, however, sir, make that effort' (replied Siffredi's daughter, sighing). 'What! are you capable of that effort yourself?' (said the king). 'I cannot promise to succeed (answered she); but I will spare no pains in the endeavour.' 'Ah, cruel Blanche! (said the prince) you will easily forget Henriquez, since you are able to form such a design!' 'And what can you expect? (replied she, in a more resolute tone). Do

you flatter yourself, that I will allow you to continue your addresses? No, sir, abandon that hope. Though I was not born to be a queen, heaven never formed me to listen to dishonourable love. My husband, as well as you, sir, is descended from the noble house of Anjou; and if my duty did not raise an insurmountable obstacle to your gallantry, my glory would hinder me from enduring it: I conjure you, therefore, to retire. We must see one another no more.' 'Heavens! what barbarity! (replied the king). Ah, Blanche! is it possible that you should treat me with such rigour? You do not think then, that your being in the arms of the Constable, is enough to overwhelm me? you must also forbid me your sight, the only consolation I had left!' 'Fly me, rather (answered the daughter of Siffredi, shedding some tears), the sight of what one tenderly loves, ceases to be pleasing, when the hope of possessing it is lost. Adieu, sir! Fly from me! You owe that effort to your own glory and my reputation. I ask it also, for my quiet: for in short, although my virtue should not be alarmed by the emotions of my heart, the remembrance of your tenderness will entail upon me such cruel conflicts, that I shall scarce have strength enough to maintain them.'

She pronounced these words so passionately, that she unwittingly overturned a candlestick which stood on a table behind her; and the candle going out in falling, she took it up in order to light it again, for which purpose, she opened the door of the antechamber, and went to the closet of Nisa, who was not yet gone to bed. The king, who waited for her return, no sooner saw her approach with the light, than he made pressing entreaties to her, that she would suffer his attachment. The Constable hearing the prince's voice, rushed into the chamber sword in hand, almost at the same time that his wife entered, and advancing towards Henriquez with all the resentment that his rage inspired, 'This is too much, tyrant! (cried he) don't think that I am so base as to endure

the affront thou hast done my honour.' 'Traitor! (replied the king, putting himself in a posture of defence), don't imagine that thou art able to execute thy design with impunity!' With these words they began a combat which was too furious to last long: the Constable fearing that Siffredi and his servants, alarmed at the cries of Blanche, would soon come and oppose his vengeance, fought without caution. His rage divested him of all judgement; he took his measures so ill, that he ran upon his adversary's sword, which entered his body to the hilt, and the moment he fell, the king checked his indignation.

Leontio's daughter, touched with the condition in which she saw her husband, and surmounting the natural repugnance she had for him, threw herself on the floor, and supported him with the most eager concern. But that unhappy spouse was too much prepossessed against her, to be affected with these expressions of her grief and compassion. Death, whose approaches he felt, could not suppress the transports of his jealousy; he saw nothing in his last moments, but the happiness of his rival, and the idea appeared so horrid, that recollecting all the strength he had left, he lifted the sword which was still in his hand, and plunged it in the breast of Blanche. 'Die (said he, while he stabbed her), die, unfaithful woman, since the ties of marriage have been too weak to preserve that faith which you swore to me at the altar! And thou, Henriquez (added he), boast not of thy fate. Thou canst not enjoy my misfortune, and therefore I die satisfied.' Having spoke thus, he expired, and his countenance, covered as it was with the shades of death, still retained something fierce and terrible. That of Blanche presented quite a different spectacle. The blow she received was mortal; she fell upon the body of her dying spouse, and the blood of this innocent victim was mixed with that of her murderer, who had executed his cruel resolution so suddenly, that the king had not time to prevent its effects.

The unfortunate prince seeing Blanche fall, uttered

a loud cry, and more confounded than she with the blow that robbed her of life, hastened to give her the same succour that she had offered to the Constable. But she said, with a faltering voice, 'Sir, you may spare yourself the trouble. I am the victim which unpitying fate demands: may it appease the wrath of heaven, and secure the happiness of your reign!' As she pronounced these words, Leontio, brought thither by her cries, entered the chamber, and struck with the objects that presented themselves to his eyes, became motionless where he stood; while Blanche, without perceiving him, continuing to speak to the king, said, 'Adieu, prince, cherish my memory! My love and misfortunes claim that favour. Entertain no resentment against my father. Comfort his age and sorrow, and do justice to his zeal. Above all, make my innocence known. This is what I recommend to you more than anything. Adieu, my dear Henriquez! I die—receive my last breath!'

So saying, she expired; and the king having kept a melancholy silence for some time, said to Siffredi, who was overwhelmed with woe, 'Behold, Leontio, contemplate your own work, and in this tragical event, consider the fruit of your officious care and zeal for me!' The old man was so penetrated with sorrow, that he made no reply. But why should I pretend to describe those things which no language can express? Let it suffice to say, that both uttered the most moving complaints, as soon as the greatness of their affliction allowed them the use of speech. The king all his life preserved the most tender remembrance of his mistress, and could never be prevailed upon to marry Constance, who being joined by the Infante Don Pedro, they spared nothing to avail themselves of Roger's last will: but they were at last obliged to yield to Prince Henriquez, who subdued all his enemies. As for Siffredi, the grief he felt for having been the cause of so many misfortunes, detached him from the world, and rendered his native country insupportable to him: he therefore abandoned Sicily, and crossing over into Spain, with

Portia, the only child he had left, purchased this castle, where he lived near fifteen years after Blanche's death, and had the comfort before he died, of seeing Portia settled: she married Don Jerome de Silva, and I am the only fruit of that marriage. This (added the widow of Don Pedro de Pinares) is the history of my family, and a faithful account of the misfortunes represented in that picture, which my grandfather, Leontio, ordered to be drawn as a monument of that fatal adventure to his posterity.

CHAPTER V

The behaviour of Aurora de Guzman, at Salamanca[1]

Ortiz, her companions, and I, having heard this relation, withdrew, and left Aurora with Elvira in the hall, where they spent the rest of the day in conversation. Far from being tired of one another, next day when we set out, they were as much affected at parting, as two friends who have long lived agreeably together.

At last we arrived (without meeting any bad accident) at Salamanca, where we immediately took a house ready furnished, and Dame Ortiz, as we had concerted it, assumed the name of Doña Ximena de Guzman. She had been too long a duenna not to be a good actress; accordingly, going out one morning with Aurora, a waiting-maid, and valet, she repaired to a house where lodgings were let, and where we understood Pacheco usually lived. Having asked if they had an apartment to be let, they answered in the affirmative, and showed her into one pretty handsomely furnished, which she hired immediately, giving earnest to the landlady, and telling her, that it was designed

[1] The story of Aurora de Guzman's stratagem, narrated in Chapters v and vi, is derived from Diego de Córdoba y Figueroa's play entitled *Todo es enredos amor*. Ortiz is the name of the old squire in the play.

for one of her nephews who was coming from Toledo, to study at Salamanca, and would arrive that very day.

The duenna and my mistress having secured this lodging, went home again, and the fair Aurora, without losing time, transformed herself into a cavalier; covering her black hair with a light-coloured tour, painting her eyebrows of the same complexion, and adjusting herself in such a manner as that she might very well pass for a young nobleman. Her carriage was free and easy, and excepting her face, which was a little too handsome for a man, nothing could possibly betray her disguise: her maid, who was to serve in the quality of a page, took the dress also, and we were under no apprehension of her ill acting, for she had a good modest assurance in her air, which was very well adapted for the part she was to play. In the afternoon, these two actresses being in a condition to appear on the stage, that is, in the lodging which had been taken, I accompanied them thither in a coach, with all the baggage we should have occasion for.

The landlady, whose name was Bernarda Ramirez, received us with great civility, and conducted us to our apartment, where we began to enter into conversation, and agreed with her for our board by the month. Then asking if she had a good many boarders, she replied, 'I have none at present. I might have abundance, if I would take all sorts of people; but I receive none but young noblemen; and I expect one this evening, who comes from Madrid to finish his studies. His name is Don Luis de Pacheco; perhaps you may have heard of him.' 'No (said Aurora), I know nothing of him, and you will oblige me by letting me know what sort of a man he is, since I am to lodge in the same house with him.' 'Sir (answered the landlady, looking at this false cavalier), he is quite a fine figure, and pretty much of your own make. Ah! how happy you will be in one another! By Santiago, I may boast of having at my house two of the most handsome noblemen in Spain.' 'This Don

Luis (replied my mistress) has doubtless a thousand love-intrigues in Salamanca?' 'Yes, I'll assure you (said the old woman), he is a brisk gallant, upon my word. He has no more to do but show himself and conquer; and among others, he has quite captivated a lady of youth and beauty, whose name is Isabella, an old lawyer's daughter, who is fond of him to distraction.' 'And tell me, good mother (cried Aurora, interrupting her with precipitation), is he as much in love with her?' 'He was (replied Bernarda Ramirez), before his departure for Madrid; but I know not if he retains his passion for her still; for in these points he is not much to be depended upon; but skips from woman to woman, as all young gentlemen usually do.'

The good widow had scarce done speaking, when hearing a noise in the court-yard, we looked through the window, and perceived two men alighting from their horses: these were no other than Don Luis de Pacheco himself, just arrived from Madrid, with his valet de chambre. Upon which, the old woman left us, in order to receive him, and my mistress prepared herself (not without emotion) to play the part of Don Felix. Don Luis, in a short time, entered our apartment in his boots, and saluted Aurora, saying, 'Understanding that a young nobleman of Toledo is a lodger here, I beg leave to express my joy in having him for a companion.' While my mistress returned this compliment, Pacheco seemed surprised to see such an amiable cavalier; and could not help telling her, that he had never before beheld any man so handsome and genteelly made. A great many civilities passed on both sides, after which Don Luis retired to the apartment allotted for him.

While he was shifting and dressing, a sort of page who wanted to deliver a letter to him, meeting Aurora on the staircase by accident, mistook her for Don Luis, and giving her the billet, said, 'Señor Cavalier, though I have never before seen Señor Pacheco, I believe I need not ask if you are he; being persuaded that I am not mistaken.' 'No, friend (replied my

mistress, with admirable presence of mind), you are assuredly not mistaken; and you acquit yourself of your commission surprisingly well. I am Don Luis de Pacheco; you may return; and I will take care to send an answer very soon.' The page disappearing, Aurora shut herself up with her maid and me, and opening the letter, read these words:—

'With what joy did I receive the news of your arrival at Salamanca! My transport had wellnigh got the better of my reason! But is Isabella still dear to you? Make haste, and assure her in person of your constancy: though she will scarce be able to support the pleasure of finding you unchanged!'

'This billet (said Aurora), proclaims the violence of the author's passion; and the lady is a rival not to be contemned. I must spare nothing to detach Don Luis from her, and even to hinder him from seeing her: the undertaking, I own, is difficult; but nevertheless, I don't despair of success.' Accordingly my mistress having mused a minute or two, added, 'I'll engage there shall be a breach between them in less than four and twenty hours.' Pacheco having taken a little repose in his own apartment, returned to ours, and renewed his conversation with Aurora, before supper. 'Señor Cavalier (said he to her, with an air of pleasantry), I believe the husbands and lovers will have no cause to rejoice at your arrival in Salamanca: but rather have reason to be uneasy: as for my own part, I tremble for my conquests.' 'Harkee (answered my mistress, in the same tone), your fear is not ill grounded: Don Felix de Mendoza is a formidable man, I assure you. I have been in this country before, and know that the women here are not insensible: about a month ago, in my way through this city, I stopped here eight days, and I will tell you in confidence, that I inflamed an old lawyer's daughter.'

I perceived Don Luis disordered at these words. 'May one, without being thought impertinent (said

he), ask the lady's name ?' 'How ! without being thought impertinent ! (cried the pretended Don Felix) why should I make a mystery of it to you ? D'ye think me more reserved than other noblemen of my age ? You must not do me such injustice. Besides, between you and me, the object does not deserve such delicacy. She's only a pitiful citizen ; and a man of quality, you know, is never seriously engrossed by such Abigails ; but thinks he does them an honour in debauching them. I will therefore, without ceremony, acquaint you with the name of the lawyer's daughter, which is, Isabella.' 'And the lawyer (cried Pacheco, interrupting her with impatience), is not he called Señor Murcia de la Llana[1] ?' 'The very same (replied my mistress) here is a letter which I received from her just now. You may read it, and see whether or not the lady has a kindness for me.' Don Luis casting his eyes over the billet, knew the hand, and was struck dumb with confusion. 'What is the matter ? (added Aurora, with an air of astonishment) you change colour ! I believe (God forgive me !) that you have some concern in this lady. Ah ! how vexed am I for having spoke of her so freely ! '

'I think myself obliged to you for your information (said Don Luis, in a transport of anger and disdain). Perfidious, fickle creature ! Don Felix, I am bound to you for ever. You have extricated me out of an error, in which I might have remained a long time. I thought myself beloved. Beloved, did I say ? I believed myself adored by that Isabella. I had, indeed, some regard for the creature ; but now I see she is a coquette who deserves nothing but contempt.' 'I applaud your resentment (said Aurora, feigning indignation in her turn), a lawyer's daughter ought to think herself very happy in having such an accomplished nobleman as you for her lover. Her inconstancy is inexcusable ; and far from accepting the

[1] Lesage no doubt took this name from the *Fe de erratas* in *Marcos de Obregon*, which was signed by Murcia de la Llana on December 9, 1617.

sacrifice she makes of you, I intend to punish her by slighting her favours.' 'For my part (replied Pacheco), the only vengeance that I shall take is never to see her again.' 'You are in the right (cried the false Mendoza); nevertheless, that she may know how much we both despise her, I think each of us should write to her an insulting letter, which I will enclose in one paper, and send as answer to this her billet. But before we proceed to this extremity, consult your heart. Perhaps you will, one day, repent of having broke with Isabella.' 'No, no (said Don Luis), I shall never be so weak; and in the meantime, consent to mortify the ungrateful creature, as you have proposed.'

I was accordingly sent for paper, pen and ink, and both of them set about composing very obliging letters for the daughter of Doctor Murcia de la Llana. Pacheco, in particular, could not find terms strong enough to express his sentiments, and tore five or six half-finished billets, because he thought they were not sufficiently severe. One, however, he was satisfied with at last; and no doubt he had reason so to be; for it contained these words: 'Learn to know yourself, my princess, and be no longer so vain as to believe that I love you. If I be captivated, it must be with other kind of merit than yours, which is scarce sufficient to amuse me for a few moments; and only calculated for diverting the meanest scholars of the university.' This courteous letter being written, and Aurora having finished hers, which was not a whit milder; she sealed them both, and enclosing them together, gave me the packet, saying, 'There, Gil Blas, be sure to deliver this to Isabella, this evening. You understand me' (added she, tipping me the wink), the meaning of which I could easily comprehend. 'Yes, sir (answered I), the thing shall be done to your wish.'

At the same time, I went out, and being in the street, said to myself, 'Oho! Gil Blas, then it seems, you play the valet in this farce. Well, friend, show that you have wit enough to perform such a fine part.

Señor Don Felix (as you see), depends so much on your understanding, that he contents himself with giving you a sign only. Is he to blame for that? No! I conceive his meaning: he desires that I should deliver the billet of Don Luis only. That is the interpretation of the sign, than which nothing could be more intelligible.' I did not hesitate in opening the packet, from which I took Pacheco's letter, and carried it to the house of Doctor Murcia, having soon informed myself whereabouts he lived. Finding the little page who had been at our lodgings, at the door; 'Brother (said I), don't you serve the daughter of Señor Doctor Murcia?' When he answered in the affirmative, 'You have such an obliging physiognomy (I replied), that I take the liberty to desire you will deliver a love-letter to your mistress.'

The page asked from whom I brought it; and I no sooner told him that it came from Don Luis de Pacheco, than he said, 'Since it is so, follow me, I have orders to bring you in. Isabella wants to talk with you.' I allowed myself, therefore, to be introduced into a closet, where I did not stay long before the lady appeared; and I was struck with the beauty of her face, having never beheld more delicate features. Her air was affected and childish; but for all that, she had walked without leading-strings for thirty good years at least. 'Friend (said she to me, with a smiling air), do you belong to Don Luis de Pacheco?' I answered, that I had been his valet de chambre these three weeks; and then delivered the fatal letter, which she read over twice or thrice, and seemed to distrust the evidence of her own senses. It is very certain, she expected nothing less than such an answer. She lifted up her eyes towards heaven, bit her lips, and for some time discovered by her countenance the pangs which her heart endured. Then all of a sudden, addressing herself to me, 'Friend (said she), is Don Luis run mad? Tell me, if you know, why he writes to me in this gallant style. What demon possesses him? If he had a mind to break with me, could he

not have done it without affronting me with such abusive letters ?'

'Madam (said I), my master is certainly to blame; but he was in some measure forced to it. If you will promise to keep the secret, I will discover the whole mystery.' 'I do promise (said she, interrupting me with precipitation); don't be afraid of my exposing you, but freely explain yourself.' 'Well, then (I resumed), this is, briefly, the affair. Immediately after he had received your letter, a lady, covered with a very thick veil, came to our lodging, and asking for Señor de Pacheco, spoke with him in private a good while; and towards the close of the conversation, I overheard her say to him, "You swear to me that you will never see her again: but that is not all—you must also, for my satisfaction, this instant, write to her a billet which I will dictate, and this I exact of you." Don Luis did as she desired, then putting the letter into my hand. "Inquire (said he), where Doctor Murcia de la Llana lives, and convey, with address, this paper to his daughter Isabella."

'So that you see, madam (added I), this disobliging letter is the work of a rival, and consequently, my master is not so much to blame.' 'O heaven! (cried she) he is more so than I imagined! His infidelity injures me more than the spiteful words which his hand wrote. Ah, the perfidious wretch! he has entered into other engagements——' But (added she, assuming a lofty air) let him abandon himself to his new flame without constraint. I don't intend to thwart him. Tell him that he had no occasion to insult me, in order to make me leave the field free to my rival; and that I despise such a fickle lover too much, to have the least desire of recalling him.' So saying, she dismissed me, and very retired much irritated against Don Luis; while I went away very well satisfied with myself, and persuaded that if I should set up for a genius, I should soon become a most dexterous cheat. I returned to our lodgings, where I found Mendoza and Pacheco at supper, conversing

together as if they had been old acquaintances. Aurora, perceiving by my cheerful countenance, that I had not acquitted myself ill of my commission; 'So, thou art returned, Gil Blas (said she), give us an account of thy message.' Being obliged to trust to my own finesse again, I told them that I had delivered the packet with my own hand; and that Isabella, after having read the two *billets-doux* which it contained, instead of seeming disconcerted, fell a-laughing like one who had lost her senses; saying, 'Upon my conscience, young noblemen have an admirable style! It must be owned, that other people don't write half so agreeably.' 'A fine way of disembarrassing herself! (cried my mistress) she must certainly be a finished coquette.' 'As for me (said Don Luis), I should never know Isabella by such behaviour: she must have entirely changed her character during my absence.' 'I could not have thought her such a person, indeed (replied Aurora), but we must allow that there are women who can assume a great many different shapes: I was once in love with one of these, who made me her dupe a long time: Gil Blas, you can tell that she had an air of virtue, which might have deceived the whole world.' 'Yes, truly (said I, mingling in the conversation), she had a look that would have decoyed the most wary. I, myself, might have been trapanned by it.'

The pretended Mendoza and Pacheco burst into a loud laugh, on hearing me talk thus: one, because I bore witness against an imaginary lady; and the other, on account of the expression I had used. We continued discoursing of women who have the art of dissembling; and the result of our conversation was, that Isabella was accused in due form, and convicted of being an arrant jilt.

Don Luis protested anew, that he would never see her, and Don Felix, by his example, swore he would always have the most perfect contempt for her. After these protestations, they professed a mutual friendship, and promised to conceal nothing from one

another. Supper being over, they proceeded to compliments; and at last, parted to go to bed, each in his own apartment. I followed Aurora to hers, where I gave an exact account of the conversation I had with the doctor's daughter; not forgetting the least circumstance. I thought she would have embraced me in the transport of her joy. 'Dear Gil Blas (said she), I am charmed with thy understanding! When one is so unfortunate as to be engaged in a passion which compels us to have recourse to stratagems, it is a great advantage to have in our interests such a sensible young fellow as thou. Courage, my friend; we have removed a rival who might have given us a world of trouble. That is no bad prognostic: but as lovers are subject to strange relapses, I think we must make a strong push, and bring Aurora de Guzman on the stage to-morrow.' I approved of the scheme, and leaving Señor Don Felix with his page, retired to bed.

CHAPTER VI

The stratagems practised by Aurora, to captivate Don Luis de Pacheco

The two new friends meeting next morning, began the day with embraces, which Aurora was obliged to give and receive, in order to act the part of Don Felix. They went out to walk, and I accompanied them with Chilindron, the valet of Don Luis; when stopping at the university, to look at the titles of books that were pasted on the gate, which a good many people amused themselves in reading, I perceived a little man among them, who gave his opinion of all the different works that were so published. I observed that he was heard with great attention, which I fancied at the same time, he believed was no more than his due: for he seemed vain and positive, as little men commonly are. 'That *New Translation of Horace* (said he),

which you see advertised in such large characters, is a work in prose, composed by an old college-author[1];—a book in great esteem among the students, who have already consumed four editions of it: and yet there is not one man of taste who has purchased so much as a single copy.' His judgement was not a whit more favourable for the other books, which he ridiculed without exception. So that, in all likelihood, he was an author himself[2]. I should not have been tired of hearing him to an end; but was obliged to follow Don Luis and Don Felix, who being as little pleased with his discourse, as interested in the books which he censured, left him to the enjoyment of his own criticism.

We came home at dinner-time, and my mistress sitting down at table with Pacheco, artfully turned the conversation on her own family. 'My father (said she) is a cadet of the house of Mendoza, and settled at Toledo; my mother is sister to Doña, Ximena de Guzman, who came to Salamanca some days ago, on an affair of importance, with her niece Aurora, the only daughter of Don Vincent de Guzman, whom, perhaps, you know.' 'No (replied Don Luis), but I have often heard of him, as well as of your cousin Aurora. Am I to believe what is reported of her? I have been assured that nothing equals her understanding but her beauty.' 'As for understanding (resumed Don Felix), she has a pretty good share, and that well cultivated: but I don't think her so very handsome. People say that she and I very much resemble one another.' 'If that be the case (cried Pacheco), she deserves the reputation she has got:

[1] This 'old college-author' was Jérôme Tarteron (1644-1720), who translated Horace's *Satires*, *Epistles*, and *Ars Poetica*, in 1689, and the *Odes* in 1704-1705. Tarteron joined the Jesuit order in 1659.

[2] The captious critic is identified as Nicolas Boindin, ridiculed by Voltaire as M. Barbou 'qui toujours parle, argue, et contredit.' Boindin has left an interesting series of *Lettres historiques sur tous les spectacles de Paris* (Paris, 1719).

your features are regular; your cousin must be quite enchanting. I wish I had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with her.' 'I undertake to satisfy your curiosity (replied the pretended Mendoza), and will carry you to my aunt's house this very afternoon.' My mistress, all of a sudden, changed the discourse, and talked on indifferent subjects. After dinner, while they were preparing to go and visit Doña Ximena, I was beforehand with them, and ran to advertise the duenna, that she might be ready to receive them; then returning instantly accompanied Don Felix, who conducted Don Luis to the house of his aunt. But they had scarce entered the house, when they met Dame Ximena, who desired them by a sign, to make no noise. 'Hush, hush (said she, with a low voice), you will wake my niece who has been tormented since yesterday, with a terrible headache, which has just left her, and the poor child has been asleep about a quarter of an hour.' 'I am sorry for this disappointment (said Mendoza); I was in good hopes of seeing my cousin, and had promised that pleasure to my friend Pacheco.' 'The affair is not very urgent (replied Ortiz, smiling), you may defer it till to-morrow.' The cavaliers conversed a little while with the old gentlewoman, and then retired.

Don Luis carried us to the house of one of his friends, a gentleman, whose name was Don Gabriel de Pedros, with whom we spent the rest of the day, supped, and did not think of coming home till two o'clock in the morning. We had got about half-way, when we stumbled over two men lying stretched upon the ground. Thinking they were unfortunate people who had been assassinated, we stopped to give them assistance, provided it was not too late; and as we endeavoured to inform ourselves of their condition, as well as the darkness of the night would allow, the patrol came up; and the commander taking us at first for the murderers, ordered his men to surround us; but he conceived a more favourable opinion of our morals, when he heard us speak, and, by the help

of a dark lantern, saw the faces of Mendoza and Pacheco. His soldiers being ordered to examine the condition of the two men, who, we fancied, had been slain, found that it was a fat licentiate, with his man, both in liquor, or rather dead drunk. 'Gentlemen (cried one of the guard), I know this epicure, it is Señor the Licentiate Guyomar, rector of our university[1]: notwithstanding the pickle you see him in now, he is a great man, a wonderful genius! There is not a philosopher in Salamanca whom he cannot confute in an argument. He has an unparalleled flow of words: 'tis pity that he is a little addicted to lawsuits, the bottle, and a wench. He was, no doubt, on his return from supping with his Isabella, where unluckily his man getting as drunk as himself, they have both tumbled into the kennel. Before the good licentiate was rector, this misfortune frequently happened to him: and you see, honours don't always change the man.' We left those drunkards in the hands of the patrol, who undertook to carry them home, and returning to our lodgings, every one went to rest.

Don Felix and Don Luis getting up about noon, Aurora was the first subject of their discourse. 'Gil Blas (said my mistress to me), go to my aunt Doña Ximena, and ask if Señor Pacheco and I can have the pleasure of seeing my cousin to-day.' I went out to acquit myself of this commission, or rather, to concert with the duenna what was to be done: and when we had taken our measures, I returned to the false Mendoza, saying, 'Señor, your cousin Aurora is surprisingly well, and charged me to assure you from her, that your visit will be very agreeable; and Doña Ximena bid me assure Señor Pacheco that he shall always be welcome at her house, on your account.'

[1] Guyomar, the drunken professor, is intended to represent Guillaume Dagoumer, rector of the University of Paris, who died in 1745; he was the author of a treatise in six volumes entitled, *Philosophia ad usum Scholae accomodata* (Lugduni, 1757).

I perceived that Don Luis was mightily pleased with these last words: my mistress observed the same, and drew a happy presage from her remark. Immediately before dinner, Doña Ximena's valet appeared, and said to Don Felix, 'Señor, a man from Toledo has been inquiring for you at your aunt's house, and left this note.' The pretended Mendoza opened it, and read aloud these words: 'If you are desirous of hearing news of your father, and of being made acquainted with other things of consequence to you, fail not, on receipt of this, to repair to the Black Horse near the university.' 'I am (said he), too curious to hear these things of consequence, not to satisfy my desire instantly. Without taking leave of you, Pacheco (added he), if I don't return in two hours, you may go by yourself to my aunt's, and I will come to you there, after dinner. You know what Gil Blas has told you from Doña Ximena, and you have a right to make the visit.' So saying, he went out, and ordered me to follow him.

You may easily guess, that instead of going to the Black Horse, we took the road to the house where Ortiz lived, where, as soon as we arrived, Aurora took off her fair-coloured tour, washed and rubbed her eyebrows, dressed herself like a woman, and became a very handsome black-eyed lady, as she naturally was: for her disguise had changed her so much, that Aurora and Don Felix appeared to be two different people. She even seemed a great deal taller, as a woman, than as a man, to which, indeed, her shoe-heels that were excessively high, contributed not a little. When she had improved her charms with all the assistance that art could bestow, she expected Don Luis with an agitation composed of hope and fear. Sometimes she confided in her beauty and wit, and sometimes was afraid that her attempt would be unsuccessful. Ortiz, on the other side, summoned all her finesse to second my mistress; and I, that Pacheco might not see me in the house, like those players who appear only in the last act, concealed

myself till towards the end of the visit, by going out as soon as I had dined.

In short, everything was in order when Don Luis arrived. He was received in a very agreeable manner, by Doña Ximena, and enjoyed a conversation with Aurora two or three hours long; at the end of which, I came into the room where they were, and addressing myself to the cavalier, 'Señor (said I), my master, Don Felix, cannot be here to-day: but begs you will excuse him, because he is in company with three men from Toledo, of whom he cannot disengage himself.' 'Ah, the little rake! (cried Doña Ximena) he is certainly set in to hard drinking.' 'No, madam (I replied), they are discoursing together of very serious affairs. He is heartily sorry that he cannot wait upon you; and ordered me to make his apology to you and Doña Aurora.' 'O! I'll have none of his apologies (said my mistress); he knows I have been indisposed, and ought to show a little more concern for his relation. In order to punish him for his indifference, he shan't see me these fifteen days.' 'Ah madam! (said Don Luis) do not form such a cruel resolution: Don Felix is rather to be pitied for not being able to visit you.'

They diverted themselves for some time, with this subject, and then Pacheco withdrew. The fair Aurora immediately transformed herself, and resuming the appearance of a cavalier, returned to the lodgings as soon as she could. 'I ask pardon, my dear friend (said she to Don Luis), for failing to meet you at my aunt's, but I could not get rid of the people in whose company I was: what consoles me for the disappointment, is, that you have at least, had leisure to satisfy your curiosity. Well, what do you think of my cousin?' 'I am enchanted by her! (answered Pacheco) you had reason to say she resembled you: I never saw features more alike: the same turn of face, the same eyes, the same mouth, and tone of voice! There is, however, some difference between you. Aurora is a little taller than you: she is dark,

and you are fair. You are merry, and she is grave. These are what distinguish you the one from the other. As for understanding (added he), I do not believe a celestial being can have more than your cousin. In a word, she is a lady of accomplished merit.'

Señor Pacheco pronounced these last words with so much vivacity, that Don Felix said, smiling, 'Friend, I advise you for the sake of your repose, to go no more to Doña Ximena's. Aurora de Guzman may make your heart ache, and inspire you with a passion.' 'There is no occasion for another sight of her, to make me in love (said he, interrupting him), that is done already.' 'I am sorry for it (replied the pretended Mendoza), for you are not one of those who can attach themselves to one, and my cousin is no Isabella. I can assure you beforehand, that she will never listen to a lover, except on honourable terms.' 'Honourable terms! (replied Don Luis) sure nobody would offer any other to a young lady of her birth. Alas! I should think myself the happiest of men, if she would approve of my addresses, and consent to join her destiny with mine!'

'Since you talk in that style (said Don Felix), I am interested in your behalf. Yes, I enlist myself in your service—offer you all my influence with Aurora, and will to-morrow bring over my aunt, who has a great sway over her.' Pacheco returned a thousand thanks to the cavalier who made him such fair promises; and we perceived with joy, that our stratagem could not succeed better. Next day, we increased the love of Don Luis, by a new invention. My mistress having been with Doña Ximena on pretence to render her favourable to that cavalier, came back and said to him, 'I have spoke to my aunt, whom with much difficulty I have made your friend. She was furiously prejudiced against you: for somebody or other had made her believe that you were a downright libertine: but I undertook your defence, and at last, destroyed the bad impression she had received of your morals.'

'This is not all (pursued Aurora), you must talk with my aunt, in my presence, and then we shall make sure of her assistance.' Pacheco expressed extreme impatience to discourse with Doña Ximena, and that fascination was granted to him next morning, when the false Mendoza conducted him to Señora Ortiz, and they three had a long conversation, in which Don Luis showed that he had allowed himself to be very much captivated, in a very little time. The artful Ximena feigned to be moved with all the tenderness he expressed, and promised her utmost endeavour to engage her niece to marry him. Pacheco immediately threw himself at the feet of such a kind aunt, and thanked her for her friendship: whereupon Don Felix asked if his cousin was up. 'No (answered the duenna), she is still a-bed, and you cannot see her at present, but return this afternoon, and you may converse with her at leisure.' This answer of Madam Ximena, redoubled (as you may well believe) the joy of Don Luis, who thought the rest of the forenoon extremely tedious, and went back to his lodgings with Mendoza, who was not a little pleased with observing in him all the marks of genuine love.

They talked of nothing but Aurora, and when they had dined, Don Felix said to Pacheco, 'There's a thought come into my head. I am of opinion, that I should go to my aunt's some minutes before you, and have a little chat with my cousin, that I may, if possible, discover the disposition of her heart towards you.' Don Luis approving this scheme, let his friend go before, and did not set out till an hour after. So, my mistress made such good use of her time, that she was dressed like a lady when her lover arrived. 'I thought (said the cavalier, after having saluted Aurora and the duenna) to have found Don Felix here.' 'You will see him immediately (answered Doña Ximena), he is writing in my closet.' Upon which, Pacheco seemed to swallow the trick, and entered into conversation with the ladies. But notwithstanding the presence of the beloved object, he

perceived that the hours stole away, without Mendoza's appearing; and as he could not help testifying some surprise at it, Aurora changing countenance all of a sudden, began to laugh, and said to Don Luis, 'Is it possible that you have no suspicion of the trick which has been played upon you? Do an artificial light-coloured tour, and painted eyebrows, make me so unlike myself, that you have been mistaken by them hitherto? Undeceive yourself then, Pacheco (continued she, resuming an air of gravity), and know that Don Felix de Mendoza and Aurora de Guzman are but one and the same person.'

She was not contented with extricating him out of this error, but also owned her passion for him, and informed him of all the steps she had taken towards its success. Don Luis, no less charmed than surprised with what he heard, threw himself at her feet, exclaiming in a transport of joy, 'Ah, beautiful Aurora! may I then believe myself the happy mortal whom you have favoured so much? How shall I recompense your goodness, which the most perfect love can never enough repay?' These words were accompanied with a thousand more passionate and tender expressions: after which, the two lovers conferred upon the measures that were to be taken towards the accomplishment of their mutual desires; and it was resolved that we should set out immediately for Madrid, and bring our comedy to a conclusion by marriage. This design was no sooner formed than put in execution: in fifteen days, Don Luis espoused my mistress, and their nuptials gave rise to infinite entertainments and rejoicings.

CHAPTER VII

Gil Blas quits his place, and goes into the service of Don Gonzales de Pacheco

THREE weeks after this marriage, my mistress being desirous of recompensing me for the service I had done

her, made me a present of a hundred pistoles, saying, 'Gil Blas, my friend, far from turning you away, I leave it to your choice to stay with me as long as you please; but my husband's uncle, Don Gonzales de Pacheco, wants to have you for a valet de chambre. I spoke to him so advantageously of you, that he assured me I would do him a favour in parting with you to him. He is an old nobleman (added she), of an excellent character, and you will be quite happy in his service.'

I thanked Aurora for her generosity, and as she had no longer any occasion for me, accepted the post to which I was recommended; the more willingly, as I should still be in the family. One morning, therefore, I went with a message from my new married mistress, to Señor Don Gonzales, who was still a-bed although it was near twelve o'clock. When I entered his chamber, I found him taking some broth which a page had brought in. The old gentleman's whiskers were in papers, his eyes almost quite extinguished, and his face pale and meagre. He was one of those old boys who have been great rakes in their youth, and are not a whit more sedate in their old age. He received me with great civility, and told me that if I would serve him with as much zeal as I had manifested for his niece, I might depend upon living happily. I promised to have the same attachment to him which I had for her, and that moment, he engaged me in his service.

Behold me then with a new master, and heaven knows what sort of a man he was! When he got up, I fancied I saw the resurrection of Lazarus. Paint to your imagination, a tall body so lean and withered, that when it was naked an anatomist might have taught osteology upon it, with legs so small that they looked like spindles, after he had put on three or four pairs of stockings. This living mummy was besides troubled with an asthma, and coughed at every word he spoke. Having drank chocolate, he called for paper and ink, and wrote a letter which he sealed and

sent away, according to the direction, by the page who had brought the broth; then turning to me, 'Friend (said he), thou art the person whom I intend henceforth to trust with my commissions, especially those which regard Doña Euphrasia, a young lady whom I love, and who is passionately fond of me.'

'Good God! (said I to myself) how can young people help believing themselves beloved, when this old dotard thinks himself adored?' 'Gil Blas (added he), thou shalt go with me this very day to her house, where I sup almost every night, and thou wilt be charmed with her prudence and reserve: far from resembling those silly coquettes who can relish nothing but youth, and are won by appearances only, she has an understanding already mature and judicious, that consults the sentiments of a man, and prefers a lover of delicacy and taste, to one of the most shining exterior.' Señor Don Gonzales did not here finish the eulogium of his mistress, whom he represented as the epitome of all perfection. But he had a hearer not easily persuaded. After the conduct of the actresses, which I had seen, I did not look upon old noblemen as people very happy in their amours. I pretended, however, out of complaisance, to believe all that my master said. I did more, I extolled the discernment and taste of Euphrasia; and was even impudent enough to affirm; that she could not have a more amiable gallant.

The good old gentleman did not perceive that I made game of him; but on the contrary, applauded my good sense. So true it is, that a sycophant may run any risk with the great, who swallow all kind of flattery, let it be ever so absurd. The old man having written his letter, pulled some hairs out of his beard with a pair of pincers, cleaned his eyes of a thick gum that filled them, washed his ears and hands, and after having performed his ablutions, painted his whiskers, eyebrows, and hair, of a black colour; continuing longer at his toilet than an old widow who studies to hide the outrage of time upon her. Just

as he had done dressing, another gentleman in years, one of his friends, entered, whose name was, the Count de Asumar. But he, far from concealing his grey hairs, supported himself on a cane, and seemed to glory in his old age, rather than in appearing young. 'Señor Pacheco (said he, as he came in), I am come to dine with you.' 'You are very welcome, Count' (answered my master). Meanwhile, having embraced one another, they sat down, and entered into conversation till such time as dinner was ready.

The discourse turned, at first, upon a bull-feast, which had been celebrated a few days before; and as they mentioned the cavaliers who had shown the greatest vigour and address, the old Count, like another Nestor, who from talking of the present, always took occasion to praise the past, said, with a sigh, 'Alas! I see no men nowadays comparable to those I have known heretofore; and the tournaments are not performed with half the magnificence that they were, when I was a young man.' I laughed within myself at the prejudice of honest Señor de Asumar, who did not confine it to tournaments only; but, I remember, when the dessert was set upon the table, seeing some fine peaches served up, he observed, 'In my time the peaches were much larger than they are at present; nature degenerates everyday!' 'At that rate (said Don Gonzales, smiling) the peaches of Adam's time must have been wonderfully large.'

Count de Asumar stayed almost the whole day with my master, who no sooner found himself disengaged, than he went out, bidding me follow him. We went to Euphrasia's, who lodged at the distance of a hundred paces from our house, and found her in a very handsome apartment. She was gaily dressed, and had such a youthful air, that I concluded she was under age, although she was good thirty years old, at least. She was really handsome, and her understanding soon raised my admiration: for she was not one of those coquettes, who have nothing to recommend them but idle ribaldry and loose behaviour; she was modest in

her manners, as well as in her conversation, and talked with a great deal of wit, without the least affectation. 'O heaven! (said I to myself) is it possible that a person of such delicacy can be a lady of pleasure?' I imagined that impudence was inseparable from all women of her profession, and was astonished to see one with the appearance of modesty; not reflecting that these princesses know how to assume any shape, and accommodate themselves to the characters of the people of fortune and nobility that fall into their hands. When their gallants are pleased with fire and transport, they are brisk and petulant; and with those who love reserve, practise a prudent and virtuous behaviour: they are the true chameleons, who change colour according to the humour and disposition of the men whom they approach.

Don Gonzales was none of those noblemen who are taken with your bold beauties: he could not bear ladies of that class; on the contrary, could relish no woman, unless she had the appearance of a vestal. Euphrasia, therefore, modelled herself accordingly, and showed that all the good actresses are not employed in the theatre. Leaving my master with his nymph, I went downstairs into a hall, where I found an old chambermaid, whom I had known as a waiting-woman to an actress. Recollecting me immediately, she said, 'What! is it you, Gil Blas? You have quitted Arsenia, it seems, as I did Constantia.' 'Yes, truly (answered I), it is a long time since I left her, and went to serve a young lady of fashion. A player's life is not to my taste; and therefore, I dismissed myself, without deigning to come to the least explanation with Arsenia.' 'You were in the right (replied the chambermaid, whose name was Beatrice), I served Constantia pretty much in the same manner: one morning early I gave in my accounts, very coldly, which she received, without uttering one syllable, and so we parted cavalierly enough.'

'I am extremely glad (said I) that we now meet in a more honourable house: Doña Euphrasia seems to

be a sort of woman of fashion, and I believe her character is very good.' 'You are not at all mistaken (said the old waiting-woman), she is of a very good family; and as for her temper, I can assure you there never was one more equal and sweet. She is none of those passionate and difficult mistresses, who find fault with everything, scold incessantly, torment their domestics, and, in one word, make a hell of their service. I never once heard her grumble; but when I happen to do anything contrary to her inclination, she reproves me without rage, and never lets one of those epithets escape her, of which your violent dames are so liberal.' 'My master (I resumed) is also very sweet-tempered: he's the best-natured mortal alive; and therefore, you and I are much more happy than we were in the service of actresses.' 'A thousand times more happy! (replied Beatrice) instead of leading a life of noise and tumult, I now live, as it were, in a retreat. No man enters these doors but Señor Don Gonzales. I shall see nobody but you in my solitude, for which I am not at all sorry; for I have had an affection for you a long time, and, more than once, envied the happiness of Laura, in having you for a gallant. But, in short, I hope to be as happy as she; for, though I have neither her youth nor her beauty, by way of amends, I hate coquetry, and am as faithful as a turtle.'

As honest Beatrice was one of those persons who are obliged to make a tender of their favours, because nobody will ask them, I was not at all tempted to profit by her advances: I did not desire, however, that she should perceive my contempt, and was even polite enough to express myself in such a manner, as that she did not lose all hopes of engaging my heart. I imagined then, that I had made a conquest of an old chambermaid, but happened, on this occasion, to be deceived; she did not behave in this manner to me, for my own sake only; her design was to inspire me with love, that she might bring me over to the interest of her mistress, for whom she was so zealous, that she

did not mind what it cost her, in promoting her advantage. I found my error next morning, when I carried a *billet-doux* from my master to Euphrasia. That lady gave me a most gracious reception, and said a thousand obliging things, in which she was joined by her maid: one admiring my physiognomy, while the other observed in me an air of prudence and sagacity. According to them, Señor Don Gonzales possessed a treasure, in having such a valet. In a word, they praised me so much, that I suspected their applause, and even discerned the motives of it; but I received it, in appearance, with all the simplicity of a fool, and by this counterplot, effectually deceived the sharpers, who, at last, pulled off the mask.

'Hark'ee, Gil Blas (said Euphrasia to me), it depends upon thyself to make thy fortune. Let us act in concert, my friend. Don Gonzales is old, and his constitution so crazy, that the least touch of a fever, assisted by an able physician, will carry him off. Let us make the best of the little time he has left, and exert ourselves so, as that he may leave the best part of his estate to me. Thou shalt have a good share of the booty, and thou mayst depend upon my promise, as much as if I had made it before all the notaries of Madrid.' 'Madam (answered I), you may command your humble servant. You have nothing to do but to prescribe my conduct, and you shall be satisfied.' 'Very well (she replied), thou must observe thy master, and give me an account of all his proceedings: when you talk to him in private, don't fail to turn the conversation upon women, and from thence artfully take occasion to speak well of me. Ply him with Euphrasia as much as possible; and I again recommend it to you, to be very attentive to what passes in the family of the Pachecos: if you perceive that any relation of Don Gonzales is extremely officious about him, and aims at the succession to his estate, acquaint me with it immediately; that is all I ask, and I warrant I shall send him adrift in a very little time; for I know the different characters of his re-

iations, and the ridiculous lights in which they may be represented to him; having already prejudiced him pretty successfully against all his nephews and cousins.'

By these instructions, and others which Euphrasia added, I concluded that this lady was one of those who attached themselves to generous old men. She had lately prevailed upon Don Gonzales to sell an estate, the price of which she had converted to her own use; she extorted from him valuable movables every-day, and, besides, had reason to hope that she would not be forgotten in his will. I pretended to engage willingly, to do all that she desired; and, dissimulation apart, doubted within myself, on my return home, whether I should contribute to impose upon my master or undertake to detach him from his mistress. The last of these resolutions seemed more honourable than the other, and I felt myself more inclined to fulfil than betray my duty: besides, Euphrasia had made me no positive promise, and that, perhaps, was the occasion of my fidelity's remaining uncorrupted. I resolved, therefore, to serve Don Gonzales with zeal, persuading myself, that if I should be lucky enough to divert his affection from his idol, I should be better rewarded for this good action, than for all the bad ones I could commit.

That I might the more easily accomplish what I proposed, I showed myself entirely devoted to the service of Doña Euphrasia; I made her believe, that I spoke of her incessantly to my master; and accordingly invented fables, which she took for sterling truth. I insinuated myself so much into her good graces, that she thought me entirely in her interest, and still the better to impose upon her, affected to appear in love with Beatrice, who, ravished to see, at her age, a young lover at her beck, did not much mind being deceived, provided she was deceived agreeably. When my master and I were each with his own princess, we composed two very different pictures in the same taste. Don Gonzales, pale and withered as I have represented him, when he attempted to ogle, looked

like a wretch in his last agonies; and my Infanta, in proportion to the seeming increase of my passion, assumed still more and more childish airs, and practised all the artifice of an old coquette, which she had been learning forty years at least; having been refined in the service of some of those heroines of gallantry, who can please even in their old age, and die loaded with the spoils of two or three generations[1].

I was not satisfied with following my master, every evening, to the house of Euphrasia, I sometimes went thither, alone, by day; but at what hour soever I went in, I never met with any man, or woman either, of a suspicious appearance; nor could I discover the least trace of infidelity, a circumstance that surprised me not a little; for I could not imagine that such a handsome lady could be exactly true to Don Gonzales. And in this, surely, my judgement was not too rash; for the fair Euphrasia (as you will presently see), that she might wait with the more patience for my master's estate, was provided with a lover more agreeable to a woman of her age.

One morning, when I carried, as usual, a letter to the princess, I perceived, while I was in her chamber, the feet of a man concealed behind the tapestry. I went away, without seeming to observe them; but although I ought not to have been surprised at this object, which was no business of mine, I did not fail to resent it. 'Ah, perfidious wretch! (said I to myself, in a passion) ah, wicked Euphrasia! thou art not satisfied with imposing upon a good old gentleman, by persuading him that he is beloved, but thou must also crown thy perfidy by abandoning thyself to another!' What a fool was I, now I think on it, to moralize in this manner! I ought rather to have laughed at the adventure, and looked upon it as a compensation for the tiresome, languid moments she underwent in her commerce with my master: I should, at least, have done better in holding my tongue, than in seizing this

[1] This passage probably refers to Ninon de Lenclos, who died on October 17, 1705.

occasion of acting the conscientious valet: but instead of moderating my zeal, I entered warmly into the interest of Don Gonzales, to whom I made a faithful report of what I had seen; I even added, that Euphrasia wanted to seduce me; I concealed nothing of what she had said on that occasion, and it was his own fault if he was not perfectly acquainted with the character of his mistress. He was confounded at the information, and a small emotion of wrath that appeared on his countenance, seemed to presage that the lady should not be unfaithful to him with impunity. 'Enough, Gil Blas (said he), I am extremely sensible of thy attachment, and pleased with thy fidelity; I will go instantly to Euphrasia, load her with reproaches, and break for ever with the ungrateful creature.' So saying, he went out accordingly, and dispensed with my attendance, that he might spare me the disagreeable part I had to play, during their *éclaircissement.*

I waited for my master's return with a world of impatience, not doubting, that as he had so much cause to complain of his nymph, he would come back altogether detached from her allurements. On this supposition, I applauded myself for what I had done; I represented to myself the satisfaction which the natural heirs of Don Gonzales would have when they learned that their kinsman was no longer the sport of a passion so contrary to their interests: I flattered myself, that they would consider me for it, and, in short, that I had distinguished myself from other valets, who are usually more apt to encourage their masters in debauchery, than to reclaim them. I was in love with honour, and reflected, with pleasure, that I should pass for the coryphæus of all domestics. But this idea, agreeable as it was, vanished in a few hours; when my patron arriving, said, 'Friend, I have had a very sharp conversation with Euphrasia, who affirms, that thou hast misrepresented her, and art, if she is to be believed, no other than an impostor, altogether devoted to my nephews, out of regard to whom, thou sparest nothing to make me quarrel with

her. I saw real tears trickle from her eyes, and she swore, by all that was sacred, that she never made any proposal to thee, nor ever sees a man ; Beatrice, who seems to be a good girl, protested the same thing, in such a manner, that my anger was appeased, in spite of my teeth.'

'How, sir (said I, interrupting him, in a sorrowful manner), do you doubt my sincerity ? Do you distrust——' 'No, child (said he, interrupting me in his turn), I do thee all manner of justice ; I don't believe thee in a confederacy with my nephews. I am persuaded that thou art concerned for my interest only, and I am obliged to thee : but appearances are deceitful. Perhaps what thou sawest, existed only in thy own imagination ; and, in that case, thou mayst guess how disagreeable thy accusation must be to Euphrasia. Be it as it may, she is a person whom I cannot help loving. I must even make the sacrifice to her which she demands, and that sacrifice is thy dismissal. I am sorry for it, my poor Gil Blas (added he), and I assure thee, I consented to it with regret ; but I could not do otherwise. What ought to console thee is, that I shall not send thee away unrecompensed : and I intend, moreover, to settle thee with a lady, a friend of mine, where thou wilt live very agreeably.'

I was very much mortified to see my zeal thus turned against myself : I cursed Euphrasia, and deplored the weakness of Don Gonzales, who allowed himself to be led by the nose. The good old man being very sensible that in turning me away, merely to please his mistress, he did not behave in the most manly manner, made amends for his effeminacy, and gilded the pill I was to swallow, with a present of fifty ducats. Next day carrying me to the Marchioness de Chaves, he told her, in my hearing, that I was a young man who possessed many good qualities ; that he had a regard for me, but family reasons not permitting him to keep me in his service, he begged she would admit me into her family. She received me that instant into the number of her domestics ; so that I found myself translated, all of a sudden, into a new place.

CHAPTER VIII

The character of the Marchioness de Chaves, and of those people who usually visited her

The Marchioness de Chaves was a widow of five-and-thirty, handsome, tall, and well shaped, who enjoyed a yearly income of ten thousand ducats, without the care and encumbrance of children[1]. I never saw a woman of more gravity, or one who spoke less, though this did not hinder her from being looked upon as the most witty lady in Madrid. The great concourse of people of quality, and men of learning, who daily frequented her house, contributed, perhaps, more than anything she said, to give her this reputation. But this I will not undertake to decide: let it suffice to say, that her name imported the idea of a superior genius, and that her house was called, by way of excellence, the Court of Criticism.

There was actually, some performance or other read here everyday, sometimes new plays, and sometimes other pieces of poetry; but nothing except serious subjects were deemed worthy of attention, humorous pieces being despised; the best comedy, or the most ingenious and witty romance was looked upon as a feeble production, that deserved no praise; whereas, the least serious work, such as an ode, eclogue, or sonnet, passed for the greatest effort of human understanding. But it often happened that the public did not confirm the sentence of the court; on the contrary, was sometimes so impolite as to hiss those pieces which had been there very much applauded.

[1] The Marquise de Chaves is usually identified as Madame de Lambert (1647-1733), whose *salon* was famous in Lesage's time. Madame de Lambert was not, however, 'without the care and encumbrance of children.' Her *Avis d'une mère à son fils* and *Avis d'une mère à sa fille* were highly popular in the eighteenth century, and were reprinted several times during the nineteenth century.

I was chamberlain in this house; that is, my office consisted in getting everything ready in the apartment of my lady for the reception of company, and to set the chairs for the men, and the cushions for the women, after which I stationed myself at the chamber-door, to announce and introduce the persons who arrived. While I was employed in this office for the first time, the governor of the pages, who, by accident, was then in the antechamber with me, described them all very pleasantly, as they came in. His name was Andrés Molina, naturally dry and satirical, with a good share of understanding. A bishop being the first who presented himself, I announced him, and when he was entered, the governor observed, 'That prelate is a man of a very pleasant character. Having a little credit at court, he would fain make every one believe that he has a great deal, and offers his interest to all the world, without serving anybody. One day, meeting at court, with a gentleman who saluted him, he stopped, loaded him with civilities, and squeezing his hand, said, "I am wholly devoted to your service; pray, sir, put me to the proof: I shall never die satisfied until I have an opportunity of obliging you." The gentleman having thanked him in a very grateful manner, they parted, and the prelate said to one of his followers, "I know that man; I have a confused idea of having seen him somewhere."'

Immediately after the bishop, the son of a grandee appeared; and when I had introduced him into my lady's chamber, 'That nobleman (said Molina) is another original. You must know that he goes often to a house, in order to treat of some important affair, with the gentleman who lives in it, and comes away without remembering to speak a syllable about the matter. But (added the governor, seeing two ladies advance) there come Doña Angela de Peñafiel, and Doña Margarita de Montalban, two ladies, between whom there is not the least resemblance: Doña Margarita, who piques herself on being a philosopher, will undertake the most profound doctors of Salamanca

in a dispute, without suffering their arguments to get the better of her argumentation. As for Doña Angela, she does not affect the virtuosos, although her understanding is perfectly well cultivated: her conversation is sensible, her sentiments refined, and her expression delicate, noble, and natural.' 'This last is an amiable character (said I to Molina), but the other, in my opinion, is inconsistent with the fair sex.' 'Not very consistent (he replied, with a sneer), and even a great many men are rendered ridiculous by such a disposition. Madame the Marchioness, our lady (continued he), is also a little tainted with philosophy. What wrangling will there be here to-day! God grant that religion may not be concerned in the dispute.'

As he spoke these words we perceived a meagre man come in, with an air of reserve and grim countenance. My governor did not spare him; 'This here (said he), is one of your serious wits who would fain pass for great geniuses, by the favour of a few sentences learned from Seneca, and who are easily detected to be fools, if you examine them a little closely.' The next that came in, was a well-shaped cavalier, with a Grecian mien, that is, a very self-sufficient appearance: when I asked who he was, Molina answered, 'He is a dramatic poet, who has composed, in his time, a hundred thousand verses, which never brought him in fourpence: but in recompense for that, he has procured a considerable settlement, by six lines of prose.'

I was going to inform myself of the nature of a fortune got so easily, when I heard a great noise on the staircase. 'Good! (cried the governor) there comes the Licentiate Campanario, who gives notice of his approach, before he appears, and beginning to talk at the street-door, continues without intermission until he goes away.' Sure enough, the whole house rang again with the voice of the thundering licentiate, who at length entered the antechamber with a bachelor of his acquaintance, and did not leave off speaking, all the time his visit lasted. 'Señor Campanario (said I to Molina) seems to be a great genius.'

'Yes (replied my governor), he has some bright sallies, quaint expressions, and a good deal of humour: but over and above his being an unconscionable talker, he does not fail to make repetitions; and not to overrate his talents, I believe the agreeable and comic air with which he seasons everything he says, constitute his chief merit: for the greatest part of his strokes would do no great honour to a collection of witticisms.'

Abundance of other people came in, of whom Molina made very humorous pictures, among which he did not forget that of the marchioness. 'I assure you (said he) our patroness is a lady of a very even temper, in spite of all her philosophy. She is not at all difficult to please, and one undergoes very few caprices in her service. She is one of the most reasonable women of quality I know, and is even without passion; she has as little taste for gallantry as for play, and loves conversation only; in short, most ladies would think her way of life insupportably tiresome.' The governor, by this eulogium, prepossessed me in favour of my mistress; nevertheless, some days after, I could not help suspecting that she was not such an enemy to love: and I will declare on what foundation my suspicion was built.

One morning, while she was at her toilet, a little man presented himself to me, about forty years old, of a disagreeable figure, more dirty than the author Pedro de Noya, and very much humpbacked into the bargain. When he told me he wanted to speak with the marchioness, I asked him, from whom? To which he answered, with a haughty look, 'From myself; tell her, I am the gentleman of whom she spoke yesterday, to Doña Anna de Velasco.' I introduced him into my lady's apartment, and signified his arrival; upon which, she immediately exclaimed in a transport of joy: 'Show him in.' She not only gave him a favourable reception, but likewise ordered all her women out of the room; so that the little hunchback, more happy than an honester man, remained

alone with her; while the chambermaids and I made ourselves merry with this fine *tête-à-tête* that lasted near an hour; after which, my patroness dismissed the crookback, loaded with civilities, that showed how well she was satisfied with his conversation, which in effect, captivated her so much, that she told me one evening, in private, 'Gil Blas, when the man with the hump returns, bring him into my apartment as secretly as possible.' I obeyed, and when the little man came back next morning, conducted him by a private staircase to my lady's chamber. I performed the same office most devoutly, two or three times, without suspecting that there could be any gallantry in the case. But the malignity which is so natural to mankind, soon inspired me with strange ideas, and I concluded that the inclination of the marchioness, was either very whimsical, or that the hunchback acted the part of go-between.

Prepossessed with this opinion, I often said to myself, 'If my lady is in love with a handsome man, I forgive her; but if she is captivated by this baboon, truly, I cannot excuse the depravity of her taste.' How much was I mistaken in my patroness! The little hunchback dabbled in magic, and as his skill had been extolled to the marchioness, who willingly listened to the delusions of such impostors, she honoured him with these private conversations, in which he showed her things in a glass, taught her to turn the sieve[1], and for money, revealed all the mysteries of the cabbala. Or rather, to speak truly, he was a sharper who subsisted at the expense of credulous people, and was said to have several women of quality under contribution.

[1] Cf. Theocritus, iii, 30.

CHAPTER IX

The incident, in consequence of which, Gil Blas quitted the Marchioness de Chaves; and the course he followed afterwards

I HAD already lived six months with the Marchioness de Chaves, and, I confess, was satisfied with my condition; but the destiny I had to fulfil would not permit me to live longer in that lady's house, nor even in Madrid: I will therefore recount the adventure that obliged me to remove from both.

Among my lady's maids there was one called Portia, who, besides her youth and beauty, possessed such an amiable character, that I attached myself to her without knowing that I must dispute her heart with a rival. The secretary of the marchioness, who was a proud man, and very much addicted to jealousy, being captivated with my princess, no sooner perceived my passion, than (without endeavouring to find out my reception by Portia) he resolved to fight me in single combat, and for this purpose appointed me to meet him one morning, in a private place. As he was a little man whose head scarce reached my shoulders, and seemed at the same time very weak, I did not think him a very dangerous rival, but repaired with great confidence to the place appointed, in hopes of gaining an easy victory, and making a merit of it with Portia; but the event did not answer my expectation. The little secretary, who had been two or three years at the fencing-school, disarmed me like an infant, and holding the point of his sword to my throat, 'Prepare (said he) for the mortal blow, or else give me thy word of honour, that thou wilt this day quit the service of the Marchioness de Chaves, and nevermore think of Portia.' I made him that promise, and kept it without reluctancy; being ashamed to appear before the rest of the servants, after my defeat, especially before the fair Helen who had been the cause of our

duel. My sole intention in returning to the house, was to carry off my goods and money, which having done, I set out the same day for Toledo, my purse being pretty well furnished, and my back loaded with a bundle composed of my whole wearing apparel: for though I had not engaged to quit Madrid, I thought proper to leave it, at least for some years; and formed the resolution of making the tour of Spain, and of halting at every town. 'The money I have (said I to myself) will carry me a great way; for I don't intend to be extravagant, and when I have no more, I will betake myself again to service. A young man of my accomplishments will find places in abundance, whenever he pleases to go in quest of them.'

I longed, in particular, to see Toledo, whither I arrived at the end of three days, and took up my lodging in a good inn, where I passed for a gentleman of consequence, by the favour of my intriguing dress, which I did not fail to put on, and by the foppish airs which I affected. It was in my own option to establish a correspondence with some handsome women who lived in the neighbourhood; but understanding that I must begin by spending a good deal of money upon them, I bridled my desires, and feeling still a strong inclination for travelling, after having seen everything that was curious in Toledo, I left it one morning by break of day, and took the road to Cuenca, with an intention to go to Aragon. On the second day of my journey, I went into an inn on the road, and just as I sat down to refresh myself, a company of soldiers belonging to the Holy Brotherhood, came in, and calling for wine, fell a-drinking. While they were over their cups, I heard them describe a young man whom they had orders to apprehend. 'The gentleman (said one of them) is not more than twenty years of age, has long black hair, a good shape, an aquiline nose, and is mounted on a bay horse.'

I listened without seeming to give attention to what they said, and truly, I did not concern myself much about the matter. Leaving them in the inn, I

set forward on my journey, and had not walked a quarter of a league, when I met a young gentleman of a good mien, mounted on a chestnut-coloured horse. 'Upon my faith! (said I to myself) this is the man whom the soldiers are in search of: he has long, black hair, and an aquiline nose. I must do him a good office.' 'Sir (said I to him), give me leave to ask, whether or not you have some affair of honour on your hands?' The young gentleman, without making any reply, looked earnestly at me, and seemed surprised at my question. Upon which, I assured him, that it was not out of curiosity that I had addressed him in this manner; and he was very well convinced of it, when I told him what I had overheard at the inn. 'Generous stranger (said he), I will not deny that I have reason to believe myself the person whom those soldiers want to apprehend; and therefore will take another road in order to avoid them.' 'It is my opinion (I replied) that we should immediately seek some place where you may be secure, and where we may be sheltered from that storm which I see brewing in the air, and which will burst very soon.' At that instant we discovered and repaired to a tufted alley of trees that conducted us to the foot of a mountain where we found a hermitage.

It was a large deep grotto that time had scooped in the rock, to which the art of man had added a kind of front, built of pebbles and shell-work, and quite covered with turf: the adjacent field was strewed with a thousand sorts of flowers which perfumed the air, and hard by the grotto, we perceived a little opening in the rock, from whence issued with an agreeable noise, a spring of water that ran winding along a meadow. At the entrance of this solitary habitation appeared a holy hermit stooping under the weight of old age, supporting himself with a staff in one hand, and holding in the other a rosary of large beads, composed of twenty courses at least[1]. His head was buried in a

[1] *De vingt dixaines pour le moins.* The ordinary Dominican rosary consists of five decades. Neither this,

brown woollen cap with long ears, and his beard, more white than snow, came down to his middle. When we approached him, 'Father (said I), be so good as to favour us with shelter from the impending storm.' 'Enter, my children (replied the anchorite, after having observed me attentively), this hermitage is at your service; and you may stay here as long as you please. As for your horse (added he, pointing to the forepart of his habitation), he will be very well accommodated in that place.' The gentleman who accompanied me, disposed of his beast accordingly, and then we followed the old man into the grotto, which as soon as we had entered, a great shower fell, mingled with flashes of lightning, and dreadful claps of thunder. The hermit fell on his knees before an image of St. Pacomo[1], which was glued to the wall, and we followed his example. Meanwhile, the thunder ceased, and we got up; but as the rain continued, and the day was far spent, 'My children (said the old man), I would not advise you to proceed on your journey in such weather, unless you have some pressing affair.' The young man and I replied that we had none that hindered us from halting, and that if we were not afraid of incommoding him, we would beg leave to pass the night in his hermitage. 'You won't incommode me in the least (said the hermit), but will have reason to complain of your lodging; for you must lie hard, and I have nothing to offer you but anchorite's fare.'

So saying, the holy man made us sit down at a small table, and presenting us with a few onions, a crust of bread, and pitcher of water, 'My sons (said he), you see my usual repast; but to-day I will commit an excess

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nor any of the other recognized rosaries—that of St. Bridget (seven Paters and sixty-three Aves), that of the Crown of Our Saviour (thirty-three Paters, five Aves, and a Credo), that of the Seven Dolours, etc.—corresponds to Lesage's description.

[1] St. Pachomius, an Egyptian monk, who founded many monasteries during the fourth century. His feast falls on May 14.

out of regard to you.' He then brought a little cheese, with two handfuls of filberts, and spread them upon the table. The young man, who had no great appetite, did not much honour to the feast; upon which, the hermit observed to him, 'I perceive that you are accustomed to better tables than mine, or rather, that sensuality has corrupted your natural taste. I have been in the world, as you are now: the most delicate viands, the most exquisite ragouts, were not too good for my palate: but since I have lived in solitude, I have received the former purity of my taste, and at present can relish nothing but roots, fruits, milk; in a word, that which composed the nourishment of our first parents.'

While he spoke in this manner, the young man sank into a profound reverie, which the hermit perceiving, 'My son (said he to him), you have an oppression on your spirits; may I not know the cause? unbosom yourself to me. It is not curiosity, but charity alone that animates my request. I am of age to give advice; and perhaps your situation requires it.' 'Yes, father (replied the cavalier, with a sigh), I have, doubtless, occasion for advice, and I will follow yours, since you are so good as to offer it. I believe I run no risk in discovering myself to a man of your character.' 'No, my son (said the senior), you have nothing to fear on that score, and may safely trust me with any secret.' In this confidence, the cavalier spoke as follows.

CHAPTER X

The story of Don Alphonso and the fair Seraphina[1]

I WILL conceal nothing from you, father, nor from the other gentleman who hears me; for, after the generosity he showed, I should be to blame to dis-

[1] Don Alphonso's narrative is adapted from Alonso de Castillo Solórzano's short story entitled *Más puede amor que la sangre.*

trust him. Listen, therefore, to my misfortunes. I was born in Madrid, and my origin is this. An officer of the German Guards, called the Baron de Steinbach, going home one evening, perceived a bundle of white linen at the foot of the staircase. He took it up and carried it to his wife's apartments, where he found it to be a new-born infant wrapped in very handsome swaddling-clothes; with a billet importing that it belonged to persons of quality who would one day make themselves known; and that it had been baptized by the name of Alphonso. I am that unhappy infant, and this is all I know of my birth and parentage: sacrificed to honour or infidelity, I know not whether my mother exposed me, in order to conceal a dishonourable flame; or seduced by a perjured lover, found herself under the cruel necessity of disowning the fruit of her womb.

Be that as it will, the baron and his lady were touched with my situation, and as they had no children of their own, determined to educate me under the name of Don Alphonso. As I advanced in years, their attachment to me increased: my flattering and complaisant behaviour attracted their caresses every moment: in a word, I had the good fortune to make myself beloved; they gave me all kinds of masters; my education became their only study; and far from expecting impatiently that my parents would discover themselves, they seemed on the contrary to wish that my birth would always remain a secret. As soon as the baron found me able to carry arms, he entered me in the service, procured for me an ensign's commission, ordered my small equipage to be got ready; and, to animate me the more to seek occasions of acquiring glory, he represented to me that the career of honour was open to everybody, and that in war, I might obtain a name the more glorious, as I should owe it to myself alone. At the same time, he revealed the secret of my birth which he had hitherto concealed from my knowledge. As I passed for his son in Madrid, and effectually believed myself to be

so, I own this piece of information gave me a good deal of pain: I could not then, nor can I now, think of it without shame; for the more my sentiments seemed to argue me of a noble origin, the greater my confusion was to see myself abandoned by those who gave me being.

I went to serve in the Low Countries, but the peace being concluded soon after, and Spain rid of her enemies, though not of those who envied her prosperity, I returned to Madrid, where I received fresh marks of tenderness from the baron and his lady. About two months after my return, a little page came into my room one morning and presented to me a billet, conceived pretty nearly in these words: 'I am neither ugly nor ill-shaped, and yet you see me frequently at the window, without paying homage with your eyes. This behaviour but ill answers your gallant appearance; and piques me so much that I wish I could inspire you with love, to be revenged on your indifference.'

Having read this billet, I did not doubt that it came from a widow called Leonora, who lived opposite to our house, and had the reputation of being very coquettish. I interrogated the page, who was on the reserve at first, but in consideration of a ducat which I slipped into his hand, he satisfied my curiosity; and even undertook to carry an answer, by which I informed his mistress, that I acknowledged my crime, and was already sensible of her being more than half revenged.

I was not at all insensible of this kind of conquest; I kept the house all that day, and took great care to be always at the window, that I might observe the lady, who did not forget to show herself at hers. I made love to her in dumb show, she answered my signals, and next morning, let me know by her page, that if I would be in the street betwixt eleven and twelve at night, I might converse with her at a parlour window. Though I did not find myself very much in love with such a forward widow, I did not fail to

return a very passionate answer, and to wait for night with as much impatience as if I had been violently smitten. In the evening, I went out, to walk in the Prado till the hour of assignation; and was no sooner arrived at that place, than a man mounted on a fine horse, alighted hard by me, and accosting me hastily, said, 'Are not you the son of Baron Steinbach?' When I replied in the affirmative, 'You are the person (said he), who intends to converse with Leonora at her window. Her page has shown me her letters, and your answers, and I have followed you this evening, from your own house hither, to let you know that you have a rival whose pride is very much mortified in being obliged to dispute a heart with such a one as you. I believe I need say no more; we are now in a private place. Let us draw therefore, unless, to avoid the chastisement I prepare for you, you will promise to break off all correspondence with Leonora. You must either sacrifice to me the hopes you have conceived, or forfeit your life immediately.' 'You ought then (said I to him) to have requested, not demanded that sacrifice; I might, perhaps, have granted it to your entreaty, but I refuse it to your threats.'

''Tis very well (he replied, after having tied his horse to a tree), draw then: it does not become a person of my quality to stoop so low as to entreat a man of your station: most people of my rank, in the same case, would have revenged themselves in a less honourable way.' I was shocked with these last words, and seeing his sword already unsheathed, drew mine also: we attacked one another with such fury, that the combat did not last long: whether he behaved with too much heat, or I had more skill, I know not, but I gave him a mortal thrust, upon which I saw him stagger and fall. Whereupon, minding my own safety only, I mounted his horse, and took the road to Toledo. I durst not return to the baron's house, being well assured that my adventure would very much afflict him, and when I considered the danger in which I

was, I thought I could not get out of Madrid too soon.

In the midst of the most melancholy reflections, I rode the remaining part of the night, and all the morning; but towards noon was obliged to halt in order to give my horse some rest, and avoid the heat of the day, which grew insupportable. I tarried therefore, in a village, till sunset, after which I continued my journey, resolving to make but one stage to Toledo. I had got two leagues beyond Illescas, when, towards midnight, I was surprised in the middle of a field, with just such another storm as fell to-day; upon which I drew near the wall of a garden that I perceived at the distance of a few paces, and not finding a more convenient shelter, stood with my horse as close as I could to the door of a summer-house situated at the end of the wall, over which there was a balcony. As I leaned against the door, I perceived it open, which I ascribed to the negligence of servants; and alighting, less out of curiosity than for the sake of being better screened from the rain, which did not fail to incommode me while I remained under the balcony, I entered the ground-floor of the summer-house with my horse, which I led by the bridle.

I employed myself during the tempest in observing the place, and though I could distinguish nothing but by the lightning that flashed around, it was easy to perceive that the house could not belong to a vulgar owner. I expected still that the rain would cease, intending to proceed on my journey; but a great light that I observed at a distance, made me change my resolution. Leaving my horse in the summer-house, the door of which I took care to secure, I advanced towards the light, persuaded that there was still somebody in the house, not yet gone to bed, and resolved to desire lodging for that night. Having crossed several walks, I arrived at a saloon, the door of which I found open also; I entered it, and when I had observed all the magnificence of the place, by the light of a fine crystal branch, I no longer doubted that

I was in the house of some rich nobleman. The pavement was of marble, the wainscot very handsome and curiously gilt, the cornices of admirable workmanship, and the ceiling painted by the most skilful masters: but what I took particular notice of was an infinite number of busts of Spanish heroes, supported on pedestals of jasper, all round the saloon. I had leisure enough to consider all these things, for though I listened attentively from time to time, I neither heard the least noise, nor saw a living creature appear.

There being on one side of the saloon a door unbolted, I half opened it, and perceived a range of rooms, the last of which only was lighted. 'What shall I do? (said I to myself) shall I return, or boldly penetrate to that room?' I concluded that the most judicious step would be to return as I came. But I could not resist my curiosity, or rather the force of destiny that dragged me along: I advanced from one room to another, until I arrived at that in which was the light, that is, a taper burning on a marble table, in a silver candlestick gilt. I at first observed very handsome and gay summer furniture, but in a little time, casting my eyes upon a bed, the curtains of which were half drawn on account of the heat, I saw an object that attracted my whole attention. This was a young lady, who, notwithstanding the noise of the thunder, lay in a profound sleep. I approached her softly, and by the light of the taper, discovered a complexion and features that quite dazzled me. My heart took the alarm at the sight! I felt my soul smitten and transported: but whatever emotions agitated my breast, the opinion which I had of her high rank, hindered me from entertaining the least rash thought, and respect prevailed over inclination.

While I glutted myself with the pleasure of contemplating her beauty, she awoke; and you may guess what was her surprise when she saw a man whom she did not know in her bedchamber at midnight. She trembled when she perceived me, and shrieked aloud; while I endeavoured to remove her

fear, by kneeling before her, and saying, 'Madam, be not afraid: I come not hither to do you the least injury.' I was going on, but her consternation was such that she did not hear me. She called her woman several times, but nobody answering, she put on a thin dressing-gown which lay at the bed's feet, got up hastily, and went into the rooms that I had crossed, still calling her maids and a younger sister who lived under her care. I expected to see all her servants appear, and had reason to apprehend that without being heard, I should meet with very disagreeable treatment; but luckily for me, she called to no purpose; nobody came but an old domestic, who could not have given her much assistance, had she had anything to fear. Nevertheless, growing more resolute by his presence, she asked with a haughty air, who I was, and how and for what reason I had the boldness to enter her house. I then began to justify myself, and had no sooner told her that I found the door of the summer-house open, than she exclaimed, 'Just heaven! what do I presage?'

So saying, she seized the light, and searching all the rooms, one after another, could see neither her maids, nor her sister, but even observed that they had carried off all their baggage. Her suspicions appearing now but too plain, she returned to me, and said, with a great deal of emotion, 'Perfidious wretch! add not dissimulation to treachery. It was not chance that brought thee here. Thou are one of the followers of Don Fernando de Leyva, and an associate in his crime: but don't think to escape, I have still people enough to secure thee.' 'Madam (answered I), do not confound me with your enemies. I know no such person as Don Fernando de Leyva, and am even ignorant of your name and quality. I am an unfortunate man whom an affair of honour hath obliged to leave Madrid; and I swear by all that is sacred, I would not have entered your house, had it not been for the storm that surprised me! Judge, therefore, more favourably of me, and instead of believing me an accomplice in

the outrage you have suffered, think me rather disposed to revenge it.' These last words, and the tone with which they were pronounced, appeased the lady, who seemed to look upon me no longer as her enemy: but if her indignation vanished, it was only to make room for her grief. She wept bitterly; I was melted by her tears, and no less afflicted than she, although I did not know the cause of her sorrow. I not only wept with her, but impatient to revenge her wrongs, was seized with a transport of fury. 'Madam (cried I), what injury have you received? Speak, I espouse your resentment. Shall I pursue Don Fernando, and stab him to the heart? Name all those whom you would have sacrificed. Command my service. Whatever dangers, whatever misfortunes may be attached to your vengeance, that stranger whom you thought confederate with your enemies, will tempt them all, for your sake.'

This transport surprised the lady, and stopped the course of her tears: 'Ah, sir! (said she) pardon my suspicion, on account of the cruel situation in which I am. These generous sentiments have undeceived Seraphina, and even freed me from the shame of seeing a stranger witness to the affront put upon my family. Yes, generous unknown! I acknowledge my error, and am far from rejecting your assistance; but I ask not the death of Don Fernando.' 'Well, madam (I replied), what services can you expect of me?' 'Sir (answered Seraphina), the cause of my complaint is this: Don Fernando de Leyva is in love with my sister Julia, whom he saw by accident at Toledo, where we usually live. Three months ago he asked her in marriage of the Count de Polan, my father, who refused his consent, on account of an old enmity subsisting between our families. My sister, not yet fifteen years of age, must have been weak enough to follow the advice of my women, whom Don Fernando has, doubtless, bribed to his interest; and he, informed of our being by ourselves in this country-house, has taken this opportunity of carrying her off. I want therefore

to know what retreat he has chosen for her, that my father and brother, who have been at Madrid these two months, may take their measures accordingly. In the name of God! (added she) give yourself the trouble of traversing the neighbourhood of Toledo, and of making an exact inquiry about the ravisher: my family will be eternally indebted to you for the favour.'

The lady did not consider, that the employment which she prescribed for me, but ill agreed with the circumstances of a man who could not get out of Castile too soon. But how was it possible for her to make this reflection, which did not even occur to me? Charmed with the happiness of finding myself necessary to the most amiable person in the world, I accepted the commission with a transport of joy, and promised to acquit myself with equal diligence and zeal. In effect, I did not wait for day, in order to go and accomplish my promise; but quitted Seraphina on the instant, conjuring her to pardon me for the fright I had occasioned, and assuring her that she should hear news of me in a very little time. I went out as I had come in; but so much engrossed by the lady, that it was not difficult for me to perceive I was already captivated by her beauty: I was the more confirmed in this, by the eagerness I felt in serving her, and the amorous chimeras which my imagination produced. I fancied that Seraphina, although possessed by her sorrow, had observed my growing passion, and beheld it perhaps not without some pleasure: I even imagined, that if I could bring her any news of her sister, and the affair should turn out according to her wish, the whole would redound to my honour.

Don Alphonso interrupting the thread of his story in this place, said to the old hermit, 'I beg pardon, father, if, too full of my passion, I enlarge upon circumstances which are, doubtless, tedious to you.' 'No, my son (replied the anchorite), they are far from being tedious: I am even pleased to know how far you are smitten by this young lady of whom you talk, that I may regulate my advice accordingly.'

My imagination heated with these flattering ideas (resumed the young man), I searched two days for Julia's ravisher: but it was to no purpose for me to make all imaginable inquiry; I could not discover the least traces of him. Very much mortified at having reaped no fruit from my researches, I returned to Seraphina, whom I expected to find in the utmost anxiety: but she was much more tranquil than I imagined, and informed me that she had been more lucky than I; that she knew what was become of her sister, having received a letter from Don Fernando himself, importing, that being privately married to Julia, he had placed her in a convent at Toledo. 'I have sent his letter to my father (added Seraphina). I hope the affair will terminate in an amicable manner, and that a solemn marriage will in a short time extinguish the hatred which has so long divided our families.'

When the lady had made me acquainted with her sister's fate, she made an apology for the trouble she had given me, and the danger to which she might have imprudently exposed me, by engaging me to pursue a ravisher, without remembering that I had told her I was obliged to fly, on account of an affair of honour: she excused herself therefore in the most obliging terms, and, as I had need of rest, carried me into the saloon, where we sat down together. She wore a loose gown of white taffeta with black stripes, and a little hat of the same stuff, with a black plume of feathers, which made me guess that she was a widow; though she appeared so young, that I did not know what to think of her condition.

If I longed for an explanation on this head, she was no less desirous of knowing who I was; accordingly, begged that I would tell her my name, not doubting (as she said) that by my noble air, and still more the generous pity that made me enter so warmly into her interests, I belonged to some considerable family. The question embarrassed me not a little: I blushed, was confounded, and own, that being less ashamed

to lie than to tell the truth, I answered, I was the son of the Baron de Steinbach, an officer of the German Guards. 'Tell me likewise (replied the lady) for what reason you quitted Madrid: I offer you, beforehand, all the credit of my father, as well as of my brother Don Gaspar: that is the least mark of gratitude I can show to a gentleman, who neglected the care of his own life to serve me.' I made no difficulty of recounting to her all the circumstances of my duel; upon which she blamed the gentleman whom I had slain, and promised to interest her whole family in my favour.

When I had satisfied her curiosity, I begged her to gratify mine, and asked whether her faith was free or plighted. 'Three years ago (she replied) my father obliged me to marry Don Diego de Lara, and I have been a widow fifteen months.' 'Madam (said I), what misfortune has deprived you of your husband so soon?' 'I will tell you, sir (resumed the lady), in return for the confidence you have reposed in me.

'Don Diego de Lara was a very genteel cavalier; but though he entertained the most violent passion for me, and, in order to please me, put in practice (everyday) all that the most tender and passionate lover could invent, to make himself agreeable to the object of his flame, and though he possessed a thousand good qualities, he could never touch my heart. Love is not always the effect of assiduities and distinguished merit. Alas! (added she) an utter stranger often enchants us at first sight. Well, it was not in my power to love him: more confounded than charmed with the tokens of his tenderness, to which I was forced to make returns without inclination, though I, in secret, taxed myself with ingratitude, I likewise found my own situation very unhappy. Unluckily for him, as well as me, his delicacy was still greater than his love. He discovered in my actions and discourse the most secret emotions of my breast, and dived to the very bottom of my soul. He complained incessantly of my indifference, and deemed himself

the more unhappy in being unable to please me, because he very well knew that there was no rival in his way; for I was scarce sixteen years old, and, before he offered me his hand, he had gained over all my women, who assured him that no man had as yet attracted my regard. "Yes, Seraphina (he would often say), I wish you had been prepossessed in favour of another, and that alone were the cause of your indifference to me: my assiduities and your own virtue would triumph over that prejudice; but I despair of making a conquest of your heart, since it remains untouched by all the love I have shown." Tired with hearing him repeat the same discourse, I told him, that, instead of troubling his repose and mine by too much delicacy, he would do well to leave his grievances to time. And truly, one of my age was not capable of relishing the refinements of such a delicate passion; so that Don Diego ought to have taken my advice: but seeing a whole year elapsed, without his being further advanced than the first day, he lost his patience, or rather his reason; and pretending to have an affair of consequence at court, departed to serve as a volunteer in the Low Countries, where he soon found in battle that which he went to seek: I mean the end of his torments and life.'

After the lady had favoured me with this relation, the singular character of her husband became the subject of our discourse; in which we were interrupted by the arrival of a courier, who delivered to Seraphina a letter from the Count de Polan. She asked my permission to read it, and I observed, that while she perused it, she grew pale, and trembled. After having read it, she lifted up her eyes to heaven, heaved a profound sigh, and her face was in a moment covered with tears. I could not behold her grief with tranquillity; I was greatly disturbed; and, as if I had presaged the cruel stroke I was to suffer, felt myself chilled with a mortal fear. 'Madam (said I, with a faltering voice), may I ask what are the fatal contents of that letter?' There, sir (replied Seraphina, in

a melancholy manner, giving me the paper), read yourself what my father writes. Alas! you are but too much concerned.'

I was confounded at her words, and, trembling while I took the letter, read:

'Your brother Don Gaspar fought yesterday in the Prado, where he received a mortal thrust, of which he died this day; having declared in his last moments, that the person who killed him is the son of Baron de Steinbach, an officer of the German Guards. What adds to the misfortune is, that the murderer has escaped me by flight: but wheresoever he conceals himself, I shall spare no pains to find him out; for which purpose I will write to some governors, who will not fail to apprehend him, if he passes through the towns of their jurisdiction; and by letters directed to other people, I will cause all the roads to be blocked up.

'THE COUNT DE POLAN.'

You may easily conceive how all my faculties were disordered by this billet. I remained for some moments without motion or power of speech; and even in the midst of this depression, perceiving what a fatal obstruction the death of Don Gaspar would be to my love, was seized with the most violent despair! I threw myself at the feet of Seraphina, and presenting my naked sword, 'Madam (said I), spare the Count de Polan the trouble of finding out a man, who might conceal himself from his resentment. Revenge your brother, by sacrificing his murderer with your own hand. Strike, madam, and let the same sword that deprived him of life, become fatal to his unfortunate adversary.' 'Sir (replied Seraphina, affected with my behaviour), I loved Don Gaspar; therefore, although you killed him honourably, and he brought his misfortune upon himself, you may be assured I enter into the resentment of my father. Yes, Don Alphonso, I am your enemy, and will act against you everything that the ties of blood and friendship can require: but

I will not take the advantage of your bad fortune, which has put you in my power. The same honour that arms me against you, hinders me from taking a base revenge. The rights of hospitality ought to be inviolable, and therefore I will not repay the service you have done me, with the conduct of an assassin. Fly, then; elude, if you can, our pursuit and the rigour of the laws, and save your life from the danger that threatens it.'

'How, madam! (I replied), when you can revenge yourself, do you leave it to the laws, which may perhaps balk your resentment? Ah! rather pierce the heart of a miserable wretch, who does not deserve your forbearance!* No, madam, do not honour me with such a noble and generous proceeding. You know not who I am: though I pass in Madrid for the son of the Baron de Steinbach, I am no other than an unfortunate foundling, whom he has brought up, out of pure compassion: I do not even know the authors of my being.' 'No matter (said Seraphina, interrupting me with precipitation, as if my last words had given her new pain), were you the lowest of mankind, I will do what honour prescribes.' 'Well, madam (said I), since the death of a brother cannot provoke you to shed my blood, I will incense you by a new crime; the audacity of which, I hope, you will not excuse. I adore you—I could not behold your charms without being dazzled with them; and, in spite of the obscurity of my fate, had entertained the hope of making you mine for ever. I was so much in love, or rather, so vain as to flatter myself that heaven (which, perhaps, favours me by keeping my origin concealed) would disclose it to me one day, when I should be able to tell you my name, without a blush. After this confession, which injures you so much, do you still hesitate in punishing me?' 'This rash declaration (replied the lady) would, doubtless, offend me at another time; but I pardon it, in consideration of your present agitation: besides my own anxiety will not permit me to attend to such discourse. Once

more, Don Alphonso (added she, shedding some tears), leave this place, fly from a house you have filled with sorrow; for every moment you stay, increases my affliction.' 'Madam, I will no longer resist (said I, rising), I must banish myself from you; but think not that, studious of preserving a life which is odious to you, I will go and seek an asylum where I can be secure. No, no! I devote myself to your resentment. I will go to Toledo, wait with impatience for the fate you decree, and, exposing myself to your pursuit, advance willingly towards the end of my misfortunes.'

So saying, I withdrew: my horse was brought out for me, and I repaired to Toledo, where I stayed a whole week; and, truly, was at so little pains to conceal myself, that I don't know how I escaped being taken; for I cannot believe that the Count de Polan, whose chief care was to shut up all the passages against me, would imagine that I could not pass through Toledo. In fine, I yesterday left that city, where I seemed to be tired of liberty; and without keeping any certain road, am come to this hermitage, like a man who has nothing to fear. You see, father, what engrosses my thoughts, and I crave the assistance of your advice.

CHAPTER XI

The old hermit discovers himself, and Gil Blas perceives that he is among his acquaintance

Alphonso having ended the melancholy narration of his misfortunes, the old hermit said to him 'Son, you have been very imprudent in staying so long at Toledo. I look upon all you have recounted, in a light very different from that in which you see it, and your passion for Seraphina is, in my opinion, pure madness. Believe me, you must forget that young lady, who cannot possibly be yours. Yield therefore, with a good grace, to the obstacles that separate you from

her, and follow your destiny, which, in all likelihood, will be productive of many other adventures. You will, questionless, find some other young lady, who will make the same impression upon your heart, and whose brother you have not slain.'

He was going to add a great many other things, in order to exhort Don Alphonso to have patience, when we saw another hermit, loaded with a wallet well stuffed, enter the hermitage. He was come from the town of Cuenca, where he had made a very successful gathering; seemed younger than his companion, and wore a red bushy beard. 'Welcome, Brother Antonio (said the old anchorite to him), what news from town?' 'Bad enough (answered the red-haired brother, putting a letter in his hand), that billet will inform you.' The senior, having opened and read it with suitable attention, cried, 'God be praised! since the plot is discovered, we must regulate our conduct accordingly. Let us change our style (added he). Señor Don Alphonso, you see a man exposed, like yourself, to the caprice of fortune. I am informed from Cuenca, which is a town about a league from this, that somebody has done me an ill office with justice; all the agents of which are to set out to-morrow for this hermitage, in order to secure my person; but they shan't find the hare in the gin. This is not the first time that I have been in such dilemmas. Thank God, I have almost always extricated myself in another shape; for such as you see me, I am neither an old man nor a hermit.'

So saying, he stripped himself of a long robe which he wore, and appeared in a doublet of black serge with slashed sleeves. Then he pulled off his cap, untied a string that supported his false beard, and, all of a sudden, assumed the figure of a man between twenty and thirty years of age. Brother Antonio, by his example, quitted his hermit's habit, rid himself of his red beard in the same manner as his companion had done, and took out of an old worm-eaten coffer a shabby short cassock, with which he clothed himself. But you may guess my surprise, when, in the person

of the old anchorite, I recollected Señor Don Raphael; and in that of Brother Antonio, my most dear and faithful valet, Ambrose de Lamela[1]! 'Good God! (cried I, immediately) I find I am among my acquaintance here.' 'True, Señor Gil Blas (said Raphael, smiling), you have found two of your friends when you least expected it. I confess you have some reason to complain of us; but let us forget what is past, and thank heaven for our meeting again. Ambrose and I make a tender of our services; and I can tell you, they are not to be despised. You must not think us the worst of mankind: we neither assault nor assassinate: we seek only to live at the expense of our neighbour; and if theft be a crime, necessity excuses the injustice. Associate with us, and lead a rambling life, which is extremely agreeable, when conducted with prudence: not but, with all our sagacity, the chain of second causes is sometimes such, that we meet with unlucky adventures. What then! we enjoy the good with the better relish on that very account. We are hardened against inconstant weather, and accustomed to the vicissitudes of fortune.'

'Señor Cavalier (added the false hermit, speaking to Don Alphonso), we make the same proposal to you, which, considering your present situation, I think you ought not to reject; for, not to mention the affair that obliges you to conceal yourself, you must certainly be in want of money.' 'Yes, truly (said Don Alphonso), and that, I own, increases my chagrin.' 'Well, then (replied Raphael), don't leave us: you cannot do better than to join your fortune to ours: you shall want nothing; and we will baffle all the search of your enemies. We know almost every inch of Spain, having travelled over it; and are acquainted with the woods, mountains, and every place proper for an asylum against the brutality of justice.' Don Alphonso thanked them for their goodwill, and being actually without money or resource, resolved to bear them company. I came to the same determination,

[1] See Book I, Chapter xvi, p. 68.

because I would not leave the young gentleman, for whom I felt a growing friendship.

Having agreed to go all together, we began to deliberate whether we should set out that instant, or, first of all, give some assaults to a bottle full of excellent wine, which Brother Antonio, the day before, had brought from Cuenca: but Raphael, as the man of greatest experience among us, represented that, before everything else, we must think of our safety. He was of opinion, therefore, that we should march all night, in order to gain a very thick wood between Villardesa and Almodabar, in which we should halt, and, being perfectly secure, spend the day in taking our repose. This advice being approved, the false hermits made two bundles of their baggage and provisions, and laid them in an equilibrium on Don Alphonso's horse. This was done with great expedition; after which we quitted the hermitage, leaving, as a prey to justice, the two hermit-robes, with the white and red beards, two pallets, a table, a rotten chest, two old straw-bottomed chairs, and the image of St. Pacomo.

We walked all night, and began to feel ourselves very much fatigued, when, at daybreak, we perceived the wood to which we were bound. The sight of a port gives new vigour to sailors tired with a long voyage. We accordingly took courage, and at last arrived at the end of our journey before sunrise. Penetrating into the thickest part of the wood, we stopped at a very agreeable spot upon a small glade, surrounded with a good many tall oaks; the branches of which meeting, formed an umbrageous arch, impervious to the heat of the day. Here we unbridled the horse to let him feed (after we had unloaded him) and sitting down together, took out of Brother Antonio's wallet some large pieces of bread, with a good many slices of roasted meat, and began to attack them as if for a wager. Nevertheless, in spite of our appetites, we often left off eating to embrace the bottle, which incessantly circulated, passing from the clasp of one into the embraces of another.

Towards the end of the repast, Don Raphael said to Don Alphonso, 'Señor Cavalier, after the confidence you have honoured me with, it is but just, that I recount to you the history of my life, with the same sincerity.' 'It will give me great pleasure' (replied the young man). 'And me in particular (cried I); for I have an extreme curiosity to hear your adventures, which are doubtless well worth our attention.' 'That I'll answer for (replied Raphael), and I intend to commit them to writing one day. That shall be the amusement of my old age; for I am still young, and would have the volume enlarged: but at present we are fatigued. Let us refresh ourselves with a few hours of sleep: while we three enjoy our rest, Ambrose will watch against all surprise, and then sleep in his turn. Though I believe we are very safe in this place, it is always good to be upon our guard.' So saying, he stretched himself upon the grass, Don Alphonso did the same, I followed their example, and Lamela stood sentry.

Don Alphonso, instead of taking some repose, kept himself awake with reflecting upon his misfortunes; and I could not close an eye. As for Don Raphael, he soon fell asleep; but awaking an hour after, and seeing us disposed to listen, he said to Lamela, 'Friend Ambrose, thou mayst now take a comfortable nap.' 'No, no (replied Lamela), I have no inclination to sleep; and though I am well acquainted with all the passages of your life, they are so instructive for people of our profession, that I shall be very well entertained in hearing them recounted once more.' Don Raphael immediately began the history of his life in these terms.

THE END OF THE FOURTH BOOK

BOOK V

CHAPTER I

The history of Don Raphael

I AM the son of an actress at Madrid, whose name was Lucinda, famous for her theatrical talents, and still more for her gallantry. As for my father, I cannot, without presumption, assume anyone in particular. 'Tis true, I might tell what man of quality was in love with my mother when I came into the world ; but that epoch would by no means be a convincing proof of his being the author of my birth. A woman of my mother's profession is so little to be trusted, that even while she appears the most attached to one nobleman, she almost always substitutes in his place some other person for his money.

There's nothing like putting oneself above scandal : Lucinda, instead of bringing me up in obscurity at her own house, took me by the hand, without ceremony, and carried me to the theatre in a very honourable manner, without giving herself any trouble about the discourse that passed at her expense, or the malicious sneers that the sight of me never failed to excite. In a word, I was her darling, and caressed by all the men that visited her, so much that it looked as if nature pleaded with them in my behalf.

I was allowed to pass the twelve first years of my life in all sorts of frivolous amusements : scarce was I taught to read and write ; and still less pains were taken to initiate me in the principles of my religion : I learned only to dance, sing, and play upon the guitar. This was all I could do, when the Marquis de Leganez

asked for me as a companion to his only son, who was pretty much of my age. Lucinda willingly complied with his request, and it was then I began to think seriously. Young Leganez was not further advanced than I: that little nobleman did not seem qualified by nature for the sciences. He hardly knew one letter of his alphabet, although he had been under the instruction of a preceptor fifteen months. His other masters succeeded no better: he exhausted their patience. They were not, indeed, permitted to use rigour; but expressly ordered to instruct, without tormenting him; and that order, joined to his natural dullness, rendered all their lessons of little or no effect.

But the preceptor invented an excellent expedient to intimidate the young nobleman, without contradicting his father's order. He resolved to flog me, when his pupil deserved punishment; and he did not fail to put his resolution in practice. Not relishing this expedient, I ran away, and complained to my mother of such unjust treatment: but, in spite of all her tenderness for me, she had strength enough to resist my tears, and considering that it was a great advantage for her son to live with the Marquis de Leganez, sent me back immediately. I was now abandoned to the preceptor, who perceiving that his invention had produced a good effect, continued to flog me still, instead of the young nobleman; and, in order to make the deeper impression upon him, disciplined me with great severity. I was sure to pay, everyday, for young Leganez; and I may venture to affirm, that he did not learn one letter of his alphabet, which did not cost me a hundred lashes. Judge you what his rudiments stood me in.

The birch was not the only disagreeable thing I suffered in this house; as everybody knew me, the meanest servant, even the scullions, reproached me with my birth. This disgusted me so much, that I ran away one day, after having found means to seize the preceptor's whole stock of ready money, which

might amount to a hundred and fifty ducats. Such was the vengeance I took for the stripes he had so unjustly bestowed upon me. I performed this sleight of hand with admirable dexterity, though it was my first essay; and having had the address to baffle the search that was made for me during two days, left Madrid, and repaired to Toledo, without being pursued.

I was then just going into my fifteenth year. What a pleasure it was to be independent at that age, and entirely master of my own actions! I soon contracted acquaintance with young people, who polished me up, and assisted me to spend my ducats: I associated with knights of the post, who cultivated my happy disposition so well, that, in a little time, I became one of the most dexterous of the order. At the end of five years, being seized with an inclination to travel, I quitted my confederates, and beginning my peregrinations by Estremadura, went as far as Alcántara: but before I reached that place, finding an opportunity of exerting my talents, I did not let it escape. Being afoot, and moreover loaded with a pretty heavy knapsack, I frequently halted to repose myself under the trees, that offered me their shade, at a little distance from the highway. In one of these resting-places, I found two lads very well dressed, talking merrily on the grass, while they enjoyed the coolness of the shade. I saluted them very courteously, and entered into conversation with them, at which they did not seem displeased. The eldest was not more than fifteen, and they seemed both to be extremely raw. 'Señor Cavalier (said the youngest to me), we are sons of two rich citizens of Plasencia, who longing extremely to see the kingdom of Portugal, in order to satisfy our curiosity, have taken a hundred pistoles each from our parents; and as we travel a-foot, have to go a great way with that sum. What is your opinion of the matter?' 'If I had so much (I replied), God knows where I should go; I would visit the four corners of the world. What the devil! two hundred

pistoles! 'tis an immense sum, and you'll never see the end of it. If it be agreeable to you, gentlemen (added I), I shall have the honour of accompanying you as far as the city of Almerin, where I am going to take possession of the estate of an uncle, who has been settled in that place twenty years, or thereabouts.'

The young citizens assured me, they would be glad of my company. Whereupon, having rested ourselves a little, we set forwards all together, towards Alcántara, where we arrived a good while before night, and went to lodge at a good inn. We asked for a room, and were shown into one, where there was a press with a key in it. Having bespoke supper, I proposed to my comrades, that we should go and see the town, while it was getting ready. They accepted the proposal, we locked our knapsacks in the press, the key of which one of the citizens put in his pocket, and going out of the inn, went to view the churches. While we were in the cathedral, I pretended, all of a sudden, to have an affair of consequence in hand, and said to my companions, 'Gentlemen, I have just recollected that a person of Toledo desired me to deliver a short message to a merchant, who lives near this church. Pray wait for me here, and I'll be back in an instant.' So saying, I left them, ran to the inn, flew to the chest, forced the lock, and rummaging the knapsacks of my young citizens, found their pistoles. Poor children! I did not leave them so much as one to pay for their night's lodging. I carried all off, quitted the town as fast as possible, and took the road to Mérida, without giving myself any further concern about them.

That adventure put me in a condition to travel agreeably: though I was young, I found myself capable of conducting myself with prudence; and I may say, I was pretty old, considering my years. Having resolved to buy a mule, I put my resolution in practice at the next village. I even converted my knapsack into a portmanteau, and began to assume a little more of the man of consequence. On the third day, I met a man singing vespers, as loud as he could roar, on the

highway. Judging, by his appearance, that he was a chanter, I accosted him with courage, 'Señor Bachelor, you sing purely, your heart goes with your profession, I see.' 'Sir (answered he), I am a chanter at your service, and amuse myself with clearing my pipes, as you hear.'

In this manner we entered into conversation, and I perceived that I had got in company with a most witty and agreeable fellow, about four or five and twenty years old. As he travelled on foot, I made my mule walk slowly, that I might have the pleasure of conversing with him; and, among other things, the discourse turning on Toledo, 'I know that city perfectly well (said the chanter), having lived a good while in it, and I believe have some friends there.' 'In what place (answered I, interrupting him), did you live at Toledo?' He replied, 'In New Street. I lived with Don Vincent de Bucna Garra, Don Matthias de Cordel, and two or three more gentlemen of honour: we lodged, ate, and passed our time agreeably together.' These words surprised me; for it must be observed, that those gentlemen, whose names he mentioned, were the very sharpers with whom I had kept company at Toledo. 'Señor Chanter (cried I), those gentlemen, whom you have named, are of my acquaintance, and I lived with them in New Street.' 'I understand you (he replied, smiling), that is to say, you are entered in the company, since I left it three years ago.' 'I have (said I) quitted these gentlemen, because I was seized with an inclination to travel. I intend to make the tour of Spain; knowing that I shall improve by experience.' 'Without doubt (he replied) one must travel before he can have a finished education: it was for this reason that I left Toledo, where I lived very agreeably. I thank heaven (added he) for having met, when I least expected it, a knight of my own order. Let us join, travel together, make attempts on our neighbour's purse, and lay hold of every occasion that presents itself, of exerting our skill.'

He made this proposal so frankly, and with such a

good grace, that I accepted it. He won my confidence all of a sudden, in bestowing his upon me, and we unbosomed ourselves to one another. I recounted my history to him, and he made no mystery of his adventures to me; letting me know, that he was just come from Portalegro, whence an unsuccessful trick had obliged him to escape with precipitation, in the dress he now wore. After he had communicated to me his whole affairs, we resolved to go to Mérida together, in order to try our fortune, by striking some lucky stroke, if possible; and then immediately decamping, to remove elsewhere. From that moment, our stock became common betwixt us; indeed Morales (so my companion was called) was not in a very brilliant situation. His whole fortune consisted of five or six ducats, with some baggage that he carried in a wallet: but if I was richer than he, in ready money, he, on the other hand, was more consummate than I, in the art of deceiving mankind.

We mounted my mule by turns, and, in this manner, arriving at Mérida, halted at an inn of the suburbs, where my comrade took out of his wallet a dress, in which he was no sooner clothed, than we went to take a turn through the town, reconnoitre the ground, and look for an opportunity of going to work. We considered every object that presented itself with great attention, and, as Homer would have said, resembled two kites that cast their eyes abroad, to look for birds on which to prey. In short, we waited, in hopes that chance would afford an occasion, on which we might employ our industry, when we perceived in the street, an old grey-haired gentleman, fighting against three men, who pushed hard at him. I was shocked at the inequality of the combat, and, as I am naturally a tilter, flew to the assistance of the old man: Morales following my example, we attacked the gentleman's three enemies, and obliged them to seek their safety in flight[1].

[1] The story of Don Raphael's attempt to impose on Moyadas is borrowed from Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza's play, *Los Empeños del mentir*.

The senior was mighty thankful. 'We are very glad (said I to him) that we happened to be here so seasonably, to give you assistance: but let us know, at least, whom we have had the good fortune to serve; and pray tell us, for what reason those three men would have assassinated you.' 'Gentlemen (he replied), I am too much obliged to refuse the satisfaction you desire. My name is Jerome de Moyadas, and I live on my fortune in this city: one of those assassins, from whom you have delivered me, made love to my daughter, asked her of me in marriage some days ago; and as he could not gain my consent, attacked me sword in hand, in order to be revenged.' 'And may one ask (I replied) your reason for refusing your consent to that gentleman?' 'I will tell you (said he). I had a brother, a merchant in this city, whose name was Augustine; two months ago he was at Calatrava, and lodged at the house of Juan Velez de la Membrilla, his correspondent, with whom he was so intimate, that, in order to strengthen their friendship still more, he promised my only daughter Florentina in marriage to his son, not doubting that he had credit enough with me to perform his promise. Accordingly, my brother, upon his return to Mérida, no sooner mentioned the affair, than I, out of love to him, consented to the marriage. He then sent Florentina's picture to Calatrava; but alas! had not the satisfaction of finishing the work, for he died three weeks ago; conjuring me, on his deathbed, to dispose of my daughter to none but his correspondent's son. This I promised, and on this account refused Florentina to the gentleman who assaulted me, although he is a very advantageous match. I am a slave to my word, and every moment expect the son of Juan Velez de la Membrilla, on whom I will bestow my daughter in marriage, though I never saw either him or his father. I beg pardon (continued Jerome de Moyadas), for troubling you with this relation: but you yourself exacted it of me.'

I listened to him with great attention, and resolving

upon a trick[1], that flashed into my head of a sudden, affected great astonishment, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and, turning towards the old man, said, in a pathetic tone, 'Ah, Señor Moyadas! is it possible, that on my first arrival at Mérida, I should be so happy as to save the life of my father-in-law?' The old citizen was strangely surprised at these words, as well as Morales, who showed, by his countenance, what a great rogue he took me to be. 'What do I hear? (replied the senior) how! Are you the son of my brother's correspondent?' 'Yes, Señor Jerome de Moyadas (answered I, with an audacious countenance, while I threw my arms about his neck), I am that happy mortal for whom the adorable Florentina is destined. But before I express my joy in entering into your family, allow me to shed into your bosom the tears which the remembrance of your brother Augustine renews! I should be the most ungrateful of all mankind, if I was not sensibly touched with the death of a person to whom I owe all the happiness of my life!' So saying, I again embraced honest Jerome, and covered my eyes with my hand, on pretence of wiping away my tears. Morales, who, in a twinkling, perceived the advantage we might reap from a trick of this kind, did not fail to second the imposture, and passing for my valet, even topped me in the sorrow I had manifested for the death of Señor Augustine. 'Señor Jerome (cried he), what a loss you have suffered in your brother's death! He was such an honest man! the very phoenix of commerce, a disinterested merchant, a merchant of integrity; there are few of his fellows to be met with.'

We had to do with a simple and credulous man, who, so far from suspecting the cheat, was himself an assistant in it. 'And why (said he) did you not come straight to my house? You should not have gone to lodge at an inn: considering the terms on which we

[1] From this point onwards, to the confession of imposture on p. 336, Lesage utilizes a theme already introduced by him in *Crispin rival de son maître.*

are, no ceremony ought to have been observed.' 'Sir (answered Morales, taking upon him to speak for me), my master is, I grant you, a little ceremonious: not but that he is excusable in some shape, in being unwilling to appear before you in his present situation: for we have been robbed in our journey hither, and lost all our baggage.' 'The young man (said I, interrupting him) tells you nothing but the truth, Señor de Moyadas. This misfortune did not permit me to come to your house: I durst not present myself in this garb, before the eyes of a mistress, who has not as yet seen me; and for that reason, I waited the return of a valet, whom I have sent to Calatrava.' 'This accident (replied the old man) ought not to have hindered you from coming to stay at my house, where I intend you shall immediately take up your lodging.'

So saying, he carried me home with him; and by the way, we talked of the pretended robbery that I had suffered, when I assured him, that what gave me the greatest concern, was my having lost, with my baggage, the picture of Florentina. Whereupon the citizen observed, with a smile, that I must console myself for that loss, the more easily, as the original was better than the copy. In effect, as soon as we came to his house, he called his daughter, who was not above sixteen years of age, and might have been counted an accomplished young lady; saying to me, 'You see the object which my late brother promised to you.' 'Ah, señor! (cried I, with a passionate air) you have no occasion to tell me, that this is the amiable Florentina! these charming features are engraved on my memory, and still more upon my heart. If the picture which I lost, and which was only a slight sketch of such perfection, could inflame me with the most ardent passion, judge how I must be transported at this moment!' 'You flatter me too much (said Florentina), for I am not vain enough to imagine, that my qualifications justify your discourse.' 'Go on with your compliments' (said the father). At the

same time, he left me alone with his daughter, and taking Morales aside, 'Friend (said he to him), you have lost all your baggage then, and, without doubt, your money too.' 'Yes, sir (answered my comrade), a great number of banditti poured upon us, near Castil Blazo, and left us nothing but the clothes on our backs: but we shall, in a very short time, receive bills of exchange, which will set all things to rights again.'

'But until those bills arrive (replied the old man, taking a purse out of his pocket), here are a hundred pistoles at your service.' 'Oh, sir! (said Morales), my master would not accept them for the world. I find you don't know him. Zooks! he is a man of great delicacy on these occasions. He is none of those fashionable youngsters, who are apt to take up from everybody. He does not love to be in debt, and would rather beg his bread than borrow one farthing.' 'So much the better (said the honest citizen), I esteem him the more on that account: I cannot bear to see young men contract debts: I pardon it indeed in people of quality; because it is a privilege they have possessed a long time. I won't (continued he) affront thy master, and since it will only give him pain to offer him money, we must say no more about it.' With these words, he was going to put the purse in his pocket again, but my companion held his hand, saying, 'Hold, Señor Moyadas, whatever aversion my master has to borrowing, I don't despair of prevailing upon him to accept your hundred pistoles. 'Tis only from strangers he is shy of borrowing: he is not so ceremonious with his own family: he can even demand of his father, with a good grace, whatever money he has occasion for. The young gentleman, you perceive, knows how to distinguish persons, and ought to look upon you, sir, as a second father.'

Morales, by such discourse, secured the purse of the old man, who came and rejoined us; and finding his daughter and me engaged in mutual compliments, interrupted our conversation, by telling Florentina

the obligation he lay under to me; and, on that score, made me professions which convinced me of his gratitude. I laid hold of such a favourable disposition, and told the citizen, that the most sensible mark of acknowledgement he could show, would be to hasten my marriage with his daughter. He yielded, with a good grace, to my impatience, assuring me, that in three days at furthest I should be Florentina's husband, and that instead of six thousand ducats, which he had promised for her dower, he would give me ten, as a proof of his being deeply affected with the service I had done him.

Morales and I, therefore, lived with the honest man Jerome de Moyadas, kindly treated, and in the agreeable expectation of ten thousand ducats, with which we proposed to make a sudden decampment from Mérida. Our joy, however, was checked by fear: we were apprehensive, that in less than three days, the true son of Juan Velez de la Membrilla would arrive, and cross our good fortune.

This fear was by no means ill founded: for, the very next day, a kind of peasant, loaded with a portmanteau, came to the house of Florentina's father, when I was not at home, though my comrade was present. 'Sir (said the peasant to the old man), I belong to a young gentleman of Calatrava, called Señor Pedro de la Membrilla, who is to be your son-in-law. We are just arrived, and he will be here presently. I came before to give you notice of his approach.' He had scarce spoke these words, when his master appeared: a circumstance that surprised the old man very much, and disconcerted Morales a little.

Pedro, who was a very genteel young fellow, addressed himself to Florentina's father; but the honest citizen did not give him time to finish his discourse, and turning to my companion, asked the meaning of all this. Then Morales, who was second to no man on earth in impudence, assumed an air of assurance, and said to the old man, 'Sir, these two men belong to the troop of thieves, who robbed us on the high-

way: I recollect them both very well, particularly him who has the audacity to call himself the son of Señor Juan Velez de la Membrilla.' The old citizen believed Morales, and, persuaded that the strangers were cheats, said to them, 'Gentlemen, you come too late: your scheme is prevented; Pedro de la Membrilla has been in my house since yesterday.' 'Take care of what you say (answered the young man of Calatrava), you have got an impostor in your family; for you must know, that Juan Velez de la Membrilla has no other son than me.' 'I know better (replied the old man), and am not ignorant of your profession: don't you recollect this young man, and remember his master, whom you robbed?' 'If I was not in your house (said Pedro), I would punish the insolence of that cheat, who has the presumption to call me a robber. Let him thank your presence, that restrains my indignation. Sir (added he), you are imposed upon. I am the young man to whom your brother Augustine promised his niece. If you desire it, I can show all the letters which he wrote to my father, on the subject of the marriage. Will you not believe it when you see the picture of Florentina, which he sent to me some time before his death?'

'No (said the old citizen interrupting him), neither the picture nor the letters will convince me: I know very well in what manner they fell into your hands, and I advise you, as a friend, to be gone from Mérida as soon as you can.' 'This is too much (cried the young gentleman in his turn), I will not suffer my name to be stolen with impunity, nor myself to be treated like a highwayman. I know some people in this place, whom I will find, and return to confound the impostor that has prejudiced you against me.' So saying, he retired with his valet, and Morales remained master of the field: nay, this adventure made Jerome de Moyadas resolve to have the marriage celebrated that very day, and he went out instantly, to give the necessary orders for the occasion.

Though my comrade was very well pleased to see

Florentina's father in a disposition so favourable to us, he was far from being perfectly at ease; fearing the consequence of the measures which he concluded Pedro would certainly take; and he waited for me with impatience, to communicate what had happened. Finding him, at my return, plunged in a profound reverie, 'What is the matter, friend? (said I) thou seemest in a brown study.' He replied, 'If I am, it is not without reason.' And informed me of the whole affair; adding, 'Thou seest what cause I have to muse. It was thou alone, who rashly threw us into this dilemma. It was a shining enterprise, I own, and would have crowned thee with glory, had it succeeded: but, in all appearance, it will end ill; and it is my advice, that, in order to prevent explanations, we immediately betake ourselves to our heels, with the feather which we have plucked from the honest man's wing.'

'Master Morales (answered I to this proposal), you yield to difficulties, I find, very soon, and don't do a great deal of honour to Don Matthias de Cordel, and the other cavaliers, with whom you lived at Toledo: one who has served his apprenticeship under such able masters, ought not to be easily alarmed. As for me, who intend to walk in the steps of these heroes, and prove myself a worthy pupil, I will bear up against the obstacle that terrifies you, and make my utmost effort to surmount it.' 'If you accomplish that (said my companion), I will prefer you to all the great men in Plutarch.'

Just as Morales had done speaking, Jerome de Moyadas coming in, said to me, 'You shall be my son-in-law this very evening: your servant (I suppose) has told you what happened. What do you think of the impudence of the rogue, who would have made me believe that he was the son of my brother's correspondent?' 'Señor (answered I, in a melancholy tone, and with the most ingenuous air I could affect), I find I am not qualified to carry on deceit. I must sincerely own that I am not the son of Juan Velez de la Membrilla.' 'What do I hear?' (cried the old man,

interrupting me with equal precipitation and surprise), how! you not the young man to whom my brother——' 'Pray, sir (said I, interrupting him in my turn), be so good as to hear me to an end. I have loved your daughter these eight days, during which, my passion has detained me at Mérida; and yesterday, after having come to your assistance, I was about to demand her in marriage, when you stopped my mouth, by giving me to understand, that she was destined for another. You told me, that your brother, in his last moments, conjured you to bestow her upon Pedro de la Membrilla; that you promised to comply with his request, and, in short, that you were a slave to your word. This information, I confess, overwhelmed me, and my love, reduced to despair, inspired me with the stratagem I put in practice. I must tell you, however, that I secretly upbraided myself with the trick I had put upon you; but I flattered myself that you would forgive it, when I should have discovered it, and convinced you, that I am an Italian prince, who travels incognito; and that my father is sovereign of certain valleys situated between the Swiss, the Milanese and Savoy. I imagined that you would be agreeably surprised, when I should have revealed my birth; and I felt all the pleasure of a delicate and passionate husband, in the hope of declaring it to Florentina, after our marriage. Heaven (added I, changing my tone) would not indulge me in so much joy: Pedro de la Membrilla appears, and I must restore him his name, how much soever the restitution will cost me. You are engaged, by your promise, to choose him for a son-in-law; and it is your duty to prefer him to me, without regard to my rank, or compassion for the cruel situation to which you are going to reduce me. I will not pretend to represent, that your brother was only the uncle of your daughter, and that you being her father, it is more just to acquit yourself of the obligation you owe me, than to make it a point of honour to keep a promise, which is but slightly binding.'

'Yes, doubtless, it is so! (cried Jerome de Moyadas) therefore I do not intend to hesitate between you and Don Pedro de la Membrilla. If my brother Augustine was still alive, he would not blame me for giving the preference to a man who saved my life, and who is, moreover, a prince, who does not disdain to ask my alliance. I must be an enemy to my own happiness, and entirely deprived of my understanding, if I did not give you my daughter, and even press the celebration of the marriage.' 'But, señor (I replied), do nothing impetuously, consult your interest only, and, notwithstanding the nobility of my blood——' 'Sure you jest! (said he, interrupting me) ought I to hesitate one moment? No, my prince, I most humbly beseech you to honour the happy Florentina with your hand, this very evening.' 'Well (said I), be it so; go carry the news yourself, and inform her of her glorious fate.'

While the honest citizen flew eagerly to tell his daughter, that she had made the conquest of a prince, Morales, who had heard the whole conversation, threw himself on his knees before me, saying, 'Monsignor the Italian prince, son of a sovereign of the valleys situated between the Swiss, Milanese and Savoy, give me leave to embrace the feet of your highness, and testify the excessive joy I feel. Upon the faith of a knave, I look upon you as a prodigy! I thought myself the first man in the world, but truly I strike to you, although you have less experience than I.' 'What! you are no longer uneasy, I hope' (said I to him). 'Oh! not at all (answered he), I am no longer afraid of Señor Pedro; let him come again as soon as he pleases.' Morales and I being now firm set in the stirrups, began to regulate the course we should take with the dowry, on which we depended so much, that we could not have thought ourselves more secure of it, had it been already in our pockets. We had not, as yet, got it, for all that, and the catastrophe of the adventure did not answer our expectation.

In a little time the young man of Calatrava re-

turned, accompanied by two citizens and an alguazil, as formidable, on account of his whiskers and swarthy complexion, as of his employment. Florentina's father being present, 'Señor de Moyadas (said Pedro to him), I have brought hither three creditable people, who know me, and can tell you who I am.' 'Yes, sure (cried the alguazil), I can tell, and I certify to all whom it may concern, that I know you. Your name is Pedro, and you are the only son of Juan Velez de la Membrilla: whoever maintains the contrary is an impostor.' 'I believe you, Mr. Alguazil (said the honest man Jerome de Moyadas), your evidence is sacred with me, as well as that of the gentlemen merchants, who are along with you. I am fully convinced that the young cavalier, who conducted you hither, is the only son of my brother's correspondent: but that does not signify, I am no longer in the mind to give him my daughter.'

'Oho! that's another affair (said the alguazil), I came hither only to assure you, that I know this young man. You are master of your child, and nobody can compel you to part with her against your inclination.' 'Nor do I intend (said Pedro, interrupting him), to offer violence to the inclination of Señor de Moyadas; but he will give me leave to ask why he has changed his sentiments, or if he has any cause to complain of me. Let me be assured, at least, that I have not lost the sweet hope of being his son-in-law by my own misbehaviour.' 'I have no cause to complain of you (replied the old man), and will even own, that it is with regret I see myself under a necessity of breaking my word, for which I conjure you to forgive me. I am persuaded that you are too generous to take it amiss, that I prefer to you a rival, who has saved my life. Here he is (pursued he, showing me to the company), this is the person who rescued me from the most imminent danger; and that my excuse may have still more force, I must inform you he is no less than an Italian prince.'

At these last words, Pedro became mute and con-

founded; the two merchants stared with the utmost surprise: but the alguazil, accustomed to look upon the worst side of everything, suspected this wonderful adventure to be a trick, that might turn out to his advantage; he eyed me very attentively, and his goodwill being baffled by my features, which were utterly unknown to him, he examined my comrade with the same attention. Unluckily for my highness, he recollected Morales, and remembering to have seen him in the prison of Ciudad Real, 'Ah ha! (cried he) here is one of my customers: I remember this gentleman, who, I assure you, is one of the most perfect sharpers within the kingdoms and principalities of Spain.' 'Softly, Mr. Alguazil (said Jerome de Moyadas), the young man, whom you paint so disadvantageously, is the domestic of a prince.' 'Very well (replied the alguazil), I know enough to form my resolution accordingly, and judge of the master by the man. I don't doubt that these gallants are two cheats, who have agreed to impose upon you. I know how to manage in such cases; and to let you see that these wits are adventurers, I will carry them instantly to jail. I intend to introduce them to a private conversation with the Señor Corregidor; after which, they will feel that whipping is not yet out of fashion.' 'Hold there, master officer (replied the old man), don't let us push matters so far: people of your profession are not afraid of giving pain to a worthy man. May not this valet be a rogue, and his master a man of honour? Is it a new thing to see sharpers in the service of princes?' 'You joke with your princes (said the alguazil), this young fellow is a knight of the post, you may depend upon it, and I arrest him and his comrade in the King's name. I have twenty soldiers at the door, who shall drag them to prison, if they refuse to go with a good grace. Come, my prince (addressing himself to me), let us march.'

I was thunderstruck at these words, as well as Morales, and our concern rendered us suspected to Jerome de Moyadas; or rather convinced him, that

we actually had a design to defraud him. On this occasion, however, he behaved like a gentleman; saying to the alguazil, 'Master Officer, perhaps your suspicions are false, and perhaps they are but too true. Be it as it will, let us dive no farther into the affair: let these two young cavaliers retire whereso-ever they please to go, and I beg you will not oppose their retreat: it is a favour I ask, in order to acquit myself of the obligation I owe to them.' 'Were I strictly to do my duty (answered the alguazil), I should imprison these gentlemen, without having any regard to your entreaty; but, for your sake, I will relax a little, provided that they quit the town this instant: for if I meet them to-morrow, egad! they shall see what will become of them.'

When Morales and I understood that we were free, we recollected ourselves a little, endeavoured to talk boldly, and affirm that we were persons of honour; but the alguazil silenced us with a fierce look; and—I don't know how—these people have an ascendant over us. We were obliged, therefore, to abandon Florentina and her portion to Pedro de la Membrilla, who, doubtless, became the son-in-law of Jerome de Moyadas, and retire with all speed, taking the road to Truxillo, with the consolation of having, at least, got a hundred pistoles by the adventure. About an hour before night, passing by a little village, with a resolution of going farther before we should halt, we perceived an inn, of a pretty good appearance for that place, and the landlord, with his wife sitting on long stones at the door. The husband, a tall, meagre, old fellow, thrummed upon a wretched guitar, for the diversion of his wife, who seemed to listen with plea-sure. 'Gentlemen (cried the landlord, when he saw we did not stop), I advise you to halt at this place: you won't find a village within three weary leagues of this; and even there, I assure you, you won't be so well served as here: take my word for it, and walk into my house, where I will entertain you handsomely, at a reasonable rate.' We suffered ourselves to be

persuaded, and approaching the man and his wife, bid them good even; and having seated ourselves by them, began, all four, to talk of indifferent subjects. The landlord said he was an officer of the Holy Brotherhood, and his wife was a fat merry dame, who seemed to understand very well how to vend her commodities.

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of twelve or fifteen cavaliers, some mounted on mules, and some a-horseback, followed by thirty baggage moyls loaded with bales. 'Ah! what a number of princes! (cried the landlord, at sight of so many people) where shall I find lodging for them all?' In a moment the village was crowded with men and beasts. There was luckily, near the inn, a vast barn, in which the moyls and the baggage were disposed: the mules and horses belonging to the cavaliers, were put in other places; and as for the men, they did not concern themselves so much about finding beds, as in bespeaking a good supper. The landlord, his wife, and a young maid-servant belonging to the house, were not idle; they slaughtered all the poultry in their yard, which joined to some ragouts made of rabbits and cats, and a plentiful dish of soup, composed of cauliflowers and mutton, furnished entertainment enough for the whole company.

Morales and I looked at the cavaliers, who, from time to time, eyed us also. At last, we entered into conversation, and told them, that if it was agreeable we would sup in company. They assured us, that we could not do them a greater pleasure; so we sat down, all together at table. There was one among them who seemed to be the chief, and for whom the rest, though otherwise very familiar, did not fail to show some deference: 'tis true, indeed, he kept the upper end, talked in an elevated tone of voice, and even contradicted, sometimes, in a cavalier manner, the sentiments of the rest, who, far from replying in the same manner to him, seemed to respect his opinions. The discourse falling, by accident, on Andalusia;

and Morales taking it into his head to praise Seville, this man said to him, 'Señor Cavalier, you are making the eulogium of the city where I first drew breath, or, at least, I was born in its neighbourhood, since the town of Mayrena gave me to the world.' 'I can say the same thing (answered my companion), I was likewise born at Mayrena, and I must certainly know your parents: pray, whose son are you?' 'I am (said the cavalier) the son of an honest notary, called Martin Morales.' 'Upon my faith! (cried my comrade, with emotion) the adventure is extremely singular: you are then my eldest brother, Manuel Morales.' 'The very same (said the other), and you are, I suppose, my young brother, Luis, whom I left in the cradle, when I quitted my father's house?' 'That is my name, indeed' (replied my comrade). Upon which they both got up, and embraced one another with great affection. Then Señor Manuel said to the company, 'Gentlemen, this event is altogether marvellous! I have, by accident, met and discovered a brother, whom I have not seen these twenty years and more: allow me to present him to the company.' All the cavaliers, who had risen from their seats, out of complaisance, saluted the young Morales, and loaded him with caresses. Afterwards, we sat down again at table, where we remained all night, without going to bed; the two brothers sitting by one another, and conversing, by themselves, about their family, while the other guests drank and made merry.

Luis, after a long conversation with Manuel, taking me aside, said, 'All these cavaliers are domestics of the Count de Montanos, whom the King has lately named Viceroy of Majorca. They are conducting their master's equipage to Alicante, where they are to embark. My brother, who is become steward to that nobleman, has proposed to carry me along with him; and, on account of the reluctance I expressed in leaving you, told me, that, if you would accompany us, he would procure for you a good employment. Dear friend (added he), I advise thee not to

disdain the offer: let us go together to the island of Majorca; if we find it agreeable, we will stay there, and if we shall be displeased with our situation, we will return to Spain.'

I willingly embraced the proposal; young Morales and I joined the count's officers, and set out with them from the inn, before day. Having, by long marches, gained the city of Alicante, I bought a guitar, and ordered a handsome suit of clothes, before our embarkation; thinking of nothing but the island of Majorca, and Luis Morales was in the same disposition. We seemed to have renounced sharping altogether. To tell you the truth, we had a mind to pass for persons of honour among the cavaliers in whose company we were; and that kept a check upon our geniuses. At last we went merrily on board, flattering ourselves with the hopes of being at Majorca in a very little time: but scarce had we cleared the Gulf of Alicante, when a terrible tempest arose. I might, in this place of my relation, take an opportunity to make a fine description of the storm; to paint the air all on fire, to make the thunder roar, the winds whistle, the mountain billow rolls, etc. But all these flowers of rhetoric apart, I assure you the hurricane was violent, and obliged us to bear away for the point of the island of Cabrera, a desert isle, in which there is a little fort, at that time garrisoned by an officer, and five or six soldiers, who gave us a very hospitable reception.

As we were obliged to stay there several days, in order to repair our sails and tackle, we invented different kinds of amusements, to pass the time agreeably. Each followed his own inclinations: some played at primero[1], others sought different diversions, and I went to walk through the island, accompanied by those who loved such exercise. We skipped from rock to rock; for the ground was very uneven, full of stones, and very deficient in good soil. One

[1] Cf. Falstaff's soliloquy in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act IV, Scene v: 'I never prospered since I forswore myself at primero.'

day, while we considered these parched, withered places, and admired the caprice of nature, that shows herself fruitful or barren, as she pleases, our noses were invaded, all of a sudden, with a most agreeable smell. We immediately turned to the eastward, from whence that odour came, and perceived, with astonishment, among the rocks, a large, round, green spot, surrounded with honeysuckles, even more beautiful and sweet-scented than those that grow in Andalusia. We approached, with pleasure, those charming shrubs, which perfumed the air all round, and found that they bordered upon the entry of a very deep cavern, which being large and light, we descended to the bottom of it, turning by steps of stone, the ends of which were adorned with flowers, the whole forming a natural winding staircase. When we had got down, we saw several little rills of water, which derived their sources from drops that incessantly distilled from the rocks within, creeping along sand more yellow than gold, and losing themselves in the earth. The water seemed so pure, that we were tempted to drink, and found it so fresh, that we resolved to return next day to the same place, with some bottles of wine, persuaded that we should empty them with vast pleasure.

It was with regret we quitted such an agreeable place, and, when we went back to the fort, we did not fail to boast of our discovery; but the commandant cautioned us, as a friend, against returning to the cavern, with which we were so much charmed. 'For what? (said I to him). Is there anything to fear?' 'Yes, without doubt (he replied); the corsairs of Algiers and Tripoli sometimes land on this isle, to water at that spring, and one day surprised two soldiers of my garrison, whom they made slaves.' It was in vain for the officer to tell us this with a very serious air: he could not persuade us; for we believed that he jested: and next day I returned to the cavern with three more of my companions, without providing ourselves with firearms, to show that we dreaded nothing. Young Morales would not be of the party,

choosing rather to stay with his brother, and play in the fort.

Having descended, as the day before, to the bottom of the cave, we cooled some bottles of wine, that we had brought along with us, in the rivulets; and while we drank them deliciously, playing on the guitar, and conversing pleasantly together, we saw several men appear at the mouth of the cavern above, with large whiskers, turbans, and Turkish dress. We imagined that it was a part of the Count's domestics, with the commandant of the fort, who had thus disguised themselves in order to frighten us; and, prepossessed with this fancy, began to laugh, letting no less than ten of them come down, without thinking of defending ourselves. We were, however, soon undeceived in a melancholy manner, and convinced that it was a corsair, who came with his people to carry us off. 'Surrender, you dogs (he cried, in the Castilian tongue), or you shall be all put to the sword.' At the same time his followers presented their carbines to us, and we should have undergone a fine discharge, had we made the least resistance. We preferred slavery to death, and gave our swords to the pirate, who ordered us to be loaded with chains, and conducted to his vessel, which was not far off: then setting sail, he steered with a fair wind towards Algiers[1].

In this manner were we punished for neglecting the caution of the officer of the garrison. The first thing that the corsair did, was to rifle us of all the money we had. What a fine windfall for him! The two hundred pistoles taken from the young citizens of Plasencia; the hundred which Morales had received from Jerome de Moyadas, and which unluckily I had about me, were all swept away without mercy. My companions had also their purses well furnished. In short, it was an excellent prize. The pirate was rejoiced at his good luck; and the rascal, not satisfied

[1] The story of Don Raphael's capture and of some of experiences in Algiers is suggested by *Marcos de Obregon*, Relacion II, Descanso viii.

with our plunder, insulted us with his raillery, which we did not feel half so much as the necessity that compelled us to bear it. After a thousand jokes, he ordered the bottles of wine which we had cooled at the fountain, and which his people had taken care to seize, to be brought to him, and began to empty them with his crew, drinking to our health, by way of derision.

During this conjuncture, the countenances of my comrades expressed the pain they felt; and their slavery mortified them the more, because they had formed the most delightful idea of their voyage to the island of Majorca, where they had laid their account with leading a most delicious life. As for me, I had fortitude enough to project a plan of conduct for myself; and, less afraid than my fellows, entered into conversation with the rallier, and even returned his jokes with a good grace. Pleased with my behaviour, 'Young man (said he), I like thy disposition; for, in the main, instead of sighing and groaning, it is better for one to arm himself with patience, and sail with the stream. Play to us a small air (added he, observing that I had a guitar), let us see what thou canst do.' I obeyed him, as soon as he had ordered my arms to be unchained, and began to thrum upon my guitar in such a manner as acquired his applause. I had, indeed, learned under the best master in Madrid, and played on that instrument pretty well. I sang likewise, and my voice gave no less satisfaction. All the Turks in the vessel expressed the pleasure they felt in hearing me, by gestures of admiration: a circumstance from which I concluded, that their taste for music was not extremely delicate. The pirate whispered to me, that I should not be an unhappy slave; and that one of my talents might depend upon an employment that would make my captivity very supportable.

I felt some joy at these words; but flattering as they were, I had abundance of uneasiness on the score of this occupation, with the promise of which the corsair regaled me. When we arrived at the port

of Algiers, we saw a great number of people assembled to receive us, who, as soon as we were landed, shouted with joy: besides, the air resounded with the confused noise of trumpets, Morisco flutes, and other instruments used in that country, which formed a symphony more loud than agreeable. The cause of these rejoicings was a false report which had spread through the city, importing that the renegado Mohammed (this was our pirate's name) had perished in attacking a large Genoese vessel: so that all his friends, informed of his return, were eager in their expressions of joy.

We had no sooner set foot on shore, than I and my companions were conducted to the palace of Dey Solyman, where a Christian secretary, examining us one by one, asked our names, ages, country, religion, and qualifications. Then Mohammed, showing me to the Dey, extolled my voice, and assured him, that I played ravishingly on the guitar. This was enough to determine Solyman to choose me for his own service: accordingly I was detained in his seraglio, while the other captives were led into a public place, and sold according to custom. What Mohammed had foretold to me in the vessel, came to pass. My condition was very happy: far from being abandoned to jailors, or employed in laborious work, I was, by order of Solyman, disposed of in a particular place, with five or six slaves of quality, who expected every moment to be redeemed, and whose tasks were far from being painful. My business was to water the orange-trees and flowers in the garden, and I could not have been favoured with a more agreeable occupation.

Solyman was a man about forty years of age, well shaped, very polite, and, for a Turk, mighty gallant. His chief favourite was a Kashmerian woman, who, by her understanding and beauty, had acquired an absolute dominion over him. He loved her even to adoration, and treated her everyday with some entertainment or other; sometimes with a concert of vocal and instrumental music, and sometimes with a

comedy in the Turkish taste ; that is to say, a dramatic poem, in which modesty and decorum were as little regarded as the rules of Aristotle[1]. The favourite, whose name was Farrukhnaz, was passionately fond of these diversions, and even made her women sometimes represent Arabian pieces before the Dey ; wherein she herself played a part, and charmed all the spectators by the grace and vivacity of her action. I being one day, among the musicians, at a representation of this kind, Solyman ordered me to play upon the guitar, and sing alone between the acts. I had the good fortune to please, was very much applauded, and the favourite seemed to look upon me with a favourable eye.

The very next day, while I was busied in watering the orange-trees in the garden, a eunuch passing by me, without stopping or speaking one word, dropped a billet at my feet : I took it up in a confusion made up of fear and joy. I lay down upon the ground, that I might not be seen from the windows of the seraglio ; and concealing myself behind the boxes in which the orange-trees were planted, opened the letter, in which I found a pretty valuable diamond, and these words in good Castilian :

' Young Christian, thank heaven for thy captivity. Love and fortune will make thee happy : love, if thou art sensible to the charms of a beautiful woman ; and fortune, if thou hast courage to despise the greatest danger.'

I did not in the least doubt that the letter came from the favourite Sultana : the style and diamond persuaded me that she must have been the author. Besides that I am not naturally very timorous, the

[1] The Turks did not, however, confine themselves to Turkish plays. In *La desdicha por la honra*, Lope de Vega mentions that one of his plays—*La Fuerza lastimosa*—was acted at Constantinople by Christian captives to please Ahmad I.'s wife, whom Cervantes, in *La Gran Sultana*, calls Doña Catalina de Oviedo.

vanity of being in the good graces of a Grand Signor's mistress, and, more than that, the hope of getting from her four times as much money as would be necessary for my ransom, made me form the design of achieving that adventure, whatever dangers might attend it. I continued my work, musing upon the means of entering the apartment of Farrukhnaz, or rather expecting that she would pave the way; for I concluded that she would not stop there, but at least be at more than half the trouble. I was not mistaken: the same eunuch, that passed me before, repassed an hour after, and said, 'Christian, hast thou considered; and wilt thou have the boldness to follow me?' I answered, 'Yes.' He replied, 'Very well: heaven preserve thee. Thou shalt see me again to-morrow morning.' So saying, he retired. Next day he appeared accordingly, about eight in the morning, and beckoned me to him. I obeyed the signal, and he conducted me into a hall, where there was a large piece of linen, which another eunuch and he had brought thither, and which they were to carry to the Sultana, for the decoration of an Arabian piece, that she was preparing for the entertainment of the Dey.

The two eunuchs, having spread out the cloth, laid me along within it, and, at the hazard of my being suffocated, rolled it up again with me in the middle: then, each taking one end of it, carried me thus, unquestioned, into the bedchamber of the fair Kashmerian, who had nobody with her but an old slave, devoted to her pleasure. When the two unrolled the cloth, Farrukhnaz, at sight of me, broke out into transports of joy, that well discovered the genius of women in that country. Bold as I naturally was, I could not see myself transported, all of a sudden, into the secret apartment of the women, without being seized with fear. The lady easily perceived it, and in order to dissipate my apprehension, said, 'Young man, fear nothing: Solyman is gone to his country-house, where he will remain all day; so that we may converse together freely.'

Encouraged by these words, I assumed a look that redoubled the favourite's joy. 'I am pleased with your person (said she), and intend to soften the rigour of your slavery: I believe you worthy of the sentiments I have conceived for you; for though you are in the dress of a slave, you have a noble and gallant air, that shows you are not of the vulgar. Speak freely, and tell me who you are. I know that captives of a noble birth disguise their rank, that they may be redeemed at an easier rate; but you have no occasion to behave in that manner with me: I should even be affronted at such a precaution, since I promise to set you at liberty. Be sincere, therefore, and confess that you are a young man of a good family.' 'Truly, madam (I replied), it would be ingratitude in me to repay your generosity with dissimulation; and since you absolutely charge me to reveal my quality, you must be satisfied. I am the son of a Spanish grandee.' Perhaps I spoke truth: at least the Sultana believed it; and, pleased that she had thrown her eyes upon a gentleman of importance, assured me that it should not be her fault, if we did not see one another often in private. We had a pretty long conversation, and I never saw a more engaging woman: she understood several languages, especially the Castilian, which she spoke pretty well. When she judged it time for us to part, I went, by her order, into an osier basket, covered with a flowered silk, the work of her own hand. Then the two slaves, who brought me in, were called, and carried me out as a present from the favourite to the Dey: a thing sacred from all the men, who are entrusted with the guard of the women.

Farrukhnaz and I found other means of seeing one another; and that amiable captive inspired me with almost as much love for her, as she had for me. Our intelligence remained secret during two months; although it is very difficult, in a seraglio, to conceal the mysteries of love so long from the Arguses that watch it. But an unlucky accident disconcerted our small affairs, and my fortune was entirely changed.

One day, when I had been introduced to the Sultana, in the body of an artificial dragon, that was made for a show, and was conversing with her, Solyman, who, I imagined, was busy in the country, interrupted us, and entered so hastily into the apartment of his favourite, that the old slave scarce had time to advertise us of his arrival. Consequently, I had no leisure to conceal myself, and therefore was the first object that presented itself to the view of the Dey.

He seemed astonished at sight of me, and his eyes kindled with fury. I looked upon myself as one that touched his last moment, and already imagined myself under the torture. As for Farrukhnaz, I perceived that she was terrified indeed: but instead of owning her crime and asking pardon, she said to Solyman, 'Señor, before you pronounce my sentence, deign to hear my defence: appearances, doubtless, condemn me, and I seem to have committed a piece of treason worthy of the most horrible chastisement. I have brought this young captive hither, and in order to introduce him into my apartment, have used the same artifice which I would have employed, if I had entertained a violent passion for him. Nevertheless, I take our holy prophet to witness that, notwithstanding this conduct, I am not unfaithful. I had a mind to converse with this Christian slave, in order to detach him from his sect, and engage him to follow that of the believers. I have found in him such a resistance as I expected; but however, I have conquered his prejudice, and he has promised to embrace Mohamedanism.'

I own, I ought to have contradicted the favourite, without any regard to the dangerous conjuncture in which I was: but being in the utmost dejection of spirit, affected with the danger in which I saw a woman whom I loved, and trembling for myself, I remained speechless and confused: I could not utter one word, and the Dey, persuaded by my silence, that his mistress said nothing but the truth, was appeased. 'Madam (said he), I am willing to believe that you have not

injured me, and that a desire of doing a thing agreeable to the prophet has engaged you to hazard such a delicate action. I forgive your imprudence, therefore, provided that this captain takes the turban immediately.' He sent for a marabout that instant, I was clothed with a Turkish dress, and did all that was required, without having power to resist. Or rather, I was ignorant of what I did, so much were my senses disordered. How many Christians are there, who would have been as base as I was on such an occasion!

After the ceremony, I quitted the seraglio, under the name of Sidy Hali, to exercise a small employment bestowed upon me by Solyman. I never saw the Sultana again; but one of her eunuchs coming to me one day, brought from her a present of jewels worth two thousand sultanins of gold[1], with a billet, in which the lady assured me, that she would never forget my generous complaisance, in suffering myself to be made a Mahometan, in order to save her life. Truly, besides the presents I received from Farrukhnaz, I obtained, through her influence, an employment more considerable than the first, and in less than seven years became one of the richest renegadoes in the city of Algiers.

You may well believe that if I assisted at the prayers which the Mussulmans put up in their mosques, and fulfilled the other duties of their religion, it was only out of pure grimace. I preserved a determined resolution to re-enter into the bosom of the church; and for that purpose, to withdraw one day, into Spain or Italy, with the riches which I should amass. In the meantime, I lived very agreeably; was lodged in a fine house, had superb gardens, a great number of slaves, and very handsome women in my seraglio. Though the use of wine is forbidden in that country to Mohammedans, they do not fail, for the most part, to drink it in private. As for my own part, I drank it without ceremony, as almost all renegadoes do. I remember I had two companions with whom I often committed a debauch in the night. One was a Jew; the other an Arabian,

[1] This would amount to about £1,000.

and both, as I imagined, honest men; so that I lived with them in the greatest familiarity. One evening I invited them to supper, and a dog, of which I was passionately fond, having died that day, we bathed his body, and buried it with all the ceremony that is observed at the funerals of the Mahometans. In so doing, we had no intention to ridicule the Mussulman religion; but only to amuse ourselves, and gratify a foolish whim that seized us in the middle of our debauch, to render the last duties to my dog.

This action, however, had wellnigh ruined me. Next day, a man came to my house, and said, 'Señor Hali, I am come hither on an important affair. The Cadi wants to speak with you; take the trouble, if you please, to go to his house immediately: an Arabian merchant who supped with you last night, has informed him of a certain impiety committed by you, with regard to a dog which you buried. For this reason I summon you to appear this day before that judge, otherwise I give you notice that you will be proceeded against in a criminal manner.' So saying, he went away, leaving me thunderstruck with this citation. The Arabian had no cause to complain of me, and I could not comprehend the traitor's reason for playing me this trick. Nevertheless, the thing was not to be neglected. I knew the Cadi was a man severe in appearance, but not at all scrupulous at bottom; so, I put two hundred sultanins of gold in my purse, and repaired to his house. He carried me into his closet, and said, with a stern look, 'You are an impious, sacrilegious, and abominable man: you have interred a dog like a Mussulman: what horrid profanation! Is it thus then you regard our most sacred ceremonies? and did you become a Mahometan only to make a jest of our worship?' 'Mr. Cadi (I replied), the Arabian who has made such a malicious report of me, that false friend is an accomplice of my crime: if it be a crime to grant the honours of burial to a faithful domestic—an animal that possessed a thousand good qualities. He loved people of merit and distinction so much, that

even in his last moments, as a testimony of his friendship, he has left them his whole fortune by a will, of which I am the sole executor. He bequeaths twenty crowns to one, thirty to another, and, sir, he has not forgot you (added I, taking out my purse), here are two hundred sultanins of gold which he charged me to give you.' The Cadi, losing his gravity at this discourse, could not help laughing, and as we were alone, took the purse without ceremony, saying, while he dismissed me, 'Go, Señor Sidy Hali, you have done well, to inter with pomp and honour, a dog who had so much consideration for persons of worth.'

By these means I extricated myself out of this affair, which, if it did not make me more wise, rendered me at least more circumspect for the future. I no longer drank with the Arabian, nor even with the Jew; but choose for a companion at my cups, a young gentleman of Leghorn, called Azarini, who was my own slave. I was not like the rest of the renegadoes, who are more cruel to Christian slaves than the Turks themselves; all my captives waited very patiently for their redemption; and indeed I treated them so gently, that sometimes, they told me, they were more afraid of changing their master, than desirous of liberty, whatever charms it has for people in a state of bondage.

One day, the Dey's vessels returned with considerable prizes, bringing in more than a hundred slaves of both sexes, whom they had taken on the coasts of Spain. Solyman kept but a very small number, and the rest were exposed to sale: I arrived in the market-place, and bought a Spanish girl about ten or twelve years old, who wept bitterly and seemed in despair. I was surprised to see one of her age so sensible of captivity; and bid her, in Castilian, moderate her affliction, assuring her that she had fallen into the hands of a master who did not want humanity, though he wore a turban. The young creature, whose mind was still engrossed by her sorrow, did not hear what I said; she did nothing but sob, complain of her fate, and from time to time, cry with a piteous accent, 'O my mother!

why are we separated ? I should have patience were we together.' In pronouncing these words, she turned her eyes towards a woman between forty and fifty years of age, who stood a few paces from her, and with a downcast look, waited in sullen silence, until somebody should purchase her. I asked the young girl, if the person she looked at was her mother. 'Yes, alas ! Señor (she replied), in the name of God, do not part us.' 'Well, my child (said I), if it is necessary for your consolation that you should be together, you shall soon be satisfied.' At the same time, I approached the mother, in order to bid for her : but I no sooner beheld her face, than I recollected with all the emotion you can imagine, the features, the individual countenance of Lucinda ! 'Just heaven ! (said I to myself) 'tis my own mother ! 'tis, doubtless, she herself !' As for her, whether the deep affliction occasioned by her misfortunes, made all the objects that surrounded her appear to her as enemies; or that my dress disguised me ; or rather, that I was much altered in twelve years, during which she had not seen me, I know not, but she did not at all remember me.'

Having bought her also, I carried them both to my house, where designing to give them the pleasure of knowing who I was, 'Madam (said I to Lucinda), is it possible that my features do not strike you ? Have my whiskers and turban disguised me so much, that you do not know your son Raphael ?' My mother starting at these words, considered my countenance, recollected me, and we embraced one another with great tenderness. I then embraced her daughter, who, perhaps, knew no more of having a brother, than I of having a sister. 'Confess (said I to my mother), that in all your theatrical pieces, you have not a recognition so original as this.' 'Son (answered she, sighing), I was at first rejoiced to see you again, but now my joy is converted into grief ! In what a situation, alas ! do I find you ? My slavery gives me a thousand times less pain, than that odious dress.' 'In good faith ! madam (said I, interrupting her with a laugh), I

admire your delicacy, which to be sure is very commendable in an actress: why, good God! mother, you must be greatly altered, if my metamorphosis offends you so much? Instead of finding fault with my turban, look upon me rather as an actor who plays the part of a Turk upon the stage: though I am a renegado, I am no more a Mussulman now, than when I was in Spain; and at bottom I feel myself still attached to my religion: when you shall know the adventures that have happened to me in this country, you will excuse my conduct. Love was my crime; and I sacrifice to that deity: I am somewhat of your disposition, I assure you. There is still another reason (added I), which ought to moderate your displeasure in seeing me thus situated. You expected to suffer in Algiers a rigorous captivity; and you find in your master, a son, tender, respectful, and rich enough to maintain you here in abundance, until we can lay hold of an occasion of returning certainly into Spain. So that you must allow that proverb to be true, which says, "It is an ill wind that blows nobody good."'

'Son (said Lucinda to me), since you design to repass one day into your own country, and there abjure the religion of Mohammed, I am comforted. Thank heaven! (continued she) that I shall be able to carry back your sister Beatrice, safe and sound, into Castile.' 'Yes, madam (cried I), you shall have it in your power: we will go all three together, as soon as possible, and rejoin the rest of our family; for I suppose you have more marks of your fruitfulness in Spain.' 'No (said my mother), I have no other children than you two; and you must know that Beatrice is the fruit of lawful wedlock.' 'Why (I resumed) did you give my little sister that advantage over me? How could you resolve to marry? I have heard you say a hundred times, during my childhood, that you could not forgive a handsome woman for taking a husband.' 'Every season has its reason, my son (she replied), men of the most firm resolution are apt to change; and would you have a woman be more constant? I

will (added she) recount my history after you left Madrid.' Then she made the following narration, which (as it is curious) I will favour you with.

'If you remember it (said my mother), you quitted young Leganez about thirteen years ago: at that time the Duke of Medina Celi told me, that he would come and sup with me in private one evening: he appointed the day, when I waited for that nobleman, who came accordingly, and I had the good fortune to please him. He demanded the sacrifice of all the rivals he might have: I granted his request, in hopes of being well paid for my condescension; and my hopes were not disappointed: for, the very next day, I received from him considerable presents, which were followed by many more, during the course of our correspondence. I was afraid that I should not be able to detain a man of such high rank a long time in my fetters; and this I dreaded the more, because I knew very well, that he had escaped from celebrated beauties, whose chains he had broke almost as soon as he had worn them. Nevertheless, far from being everyday less and less pleased with my favours, his raptures seemed rather to increase: in short, I had the art to amuse him, and hinder his heart, naturally inconstant, from giving way to its usual levity.

'He had already been attached to me three months, and I had room to flatter myself, that his passion would be of long duration; when one of my she-friends and I went to an assembly, where he happened to be with his duchess, in order to hear a concert of vocal and instrumental music. We chanced to place ourselves pretty near the duchess, who was pleased to take it amiss, that I should presume to appear in a place where she was, and sent a message to me, by one of her women, desiring that I would immediately withdraw. I returned an insolent answer, which incensed the duchess so much, that she complained of it to her husband, who came to me in person, and said, 'Retire, Lucinda; though noblemen of my rank attach themselves to such little creatures as you, they must not

forget themselves altogether : if we love you more than our wives, we honour our wives more than you ; and as often as you have the insolence to put yourselves in competition with them, you will always have the mortification to be treated with indignity.

'Luckily for me the Duke spoke this in a tone of voice so low, that not one word was overheard by the people around us. I withdrew, covered with shame, and wept with vexation, for the affront I had received. To crown my confusion, the actors and actresses got notice of the adventure that very evening : one would think these people entertain a demon, who delights in reporting to one whatever happens to another. If an actor, for example, is guilty of some extravagant action in a debauch, or an actress enters into articles with a rich gallant, the company is immediately informed of the circumstance. All my comrades, therefore, knew what happened at the concert, and God knows how they rejoiced at my expense ! A spirit of charity, which reigns among them, usually manifests itself on these occasions. I put myself, however, above their tittle-tattle, and consoled myself for the loss of the Duke de Medina Celi ; for he visited me no more, and I learned a few days after that a Carthusian nun had made a conquest of him.

'When a lady belonging to the theatre has the good fortune to be in vogue, she cannot want lovers ; and the passion of a grandee, though it does not last above three days, greatly enhances her price. I found myself besieged with adorers, as soon as it was known in Madrid that the Duke had forsaken me. Those rivals whom I had sacrificed to him, more captivated by my charms than ever, returned in crowds, as candidates for my favour ; I received homage from a thousand other hearts, and was never so much in fashion before. Of all the men who courted my graces, a fat German, gentleman to the Duke of Osuna, seemed the most eager. He had not a very amiable person, but attracted my attention by a thousand pistoles, which he had amassed in the service of his master,

and which he squandered away, in order to be deemed worthy of being in the list of my happy gallants. As long as this worthy admirer, whose name was Brutandorf, had money to spend, I gave him a favourable reception: but when he was ruined, he found my door always shut against him. This proceeding of mine displeased him, and he came to search for me at the theatre, during the play. He found me behind the scenes, and began to reproach me for my ingratitude. I laughed in his face, at which he was enraged, and lent me a box on the ear, like a blunt German as he was: I shrieked aloud, interrupted the representation, appeared upon the stage, and addressing myself to the Duke of Osuna, who was present with the duchess his lady, demanded justice for the German behaviour of his gentleman. The Duke ordered us to go on with the play, and said he would hear the parties, when we had finished the piece. As soon as it was over, I presented myself, in a good deal of emotion, before the Duke, and signified my grievance in a pathetic manner; as for the German, he employed but two words in his defence; he said, that far from repenting of what he had done, he would do it again, on the same provocation. Both parties being heard, the Duke of Osuna said to my adversary, "Brutandorf, I dismiss you from my service; let me never see your face again: not that I mind your having struck an actress, but am offended at your want of respect to your master and mistress, by presuming to disturb the entertainment in their presence."

'This sentence I could not digest. I was mortally piqued, because the German had not been turned away on account of his insolence to me: I imagined that such an affront put upon an actress, ought to have been as severely punished as petty treason, and I had laid my account with seeing the gentleman undergo some terrible infliction. This disagreeable event undeceived and convinced me, that the world always makes a distinction between the players and the characters they represent. I was, for this reason, disgusted with the

stage, which I resolved to abandon, and go to live at a great distance from Madrid. I accordingly chose the city of Valencia for the place of my retreat, and thither I repaired incognito, with the value of twenty thousand ducats, in jewels and cash: a fortune, as I thought, sufficient to maintain me during the rest of my days; since I designed to lead a very retired life. I took a small house at Valencia, and had no other domestics than a maidservant and a page, to whom I was as little known as to the whole city. I pretended to be the widow of an officer of the King's household; and said I came to settle at Valencia, because it had the reputation of being one of the most agreeable places in Spain.[1] I saw but very little company, and observed such a regular conduct, that I was never suspected of having been an actress. In spite of my care, however, to keep myself concealed, I attracted the notice of a gentleman, who had a country-house near Paterna. He was a very well-made cavalier between thirty-five and forty years of age, but withal a nobleman very much in debt; which is no great rarity in the kingdom of Valencia, more than in other countries.

'This señor hidalgo finding my person to his liking, wanted to know if I could answer his purpose in other respects: for this end, he uncoupled his spies to make discoveries, and had the pleasure to learn from their report, that, besides some share of beauty, I was a widow of good fortune. He looked upon me, therefore, as a suitable match, and, in a little time, an honest old gentlewoman came to my house, and told me, from him, that being equally charmed with my beauty and virtue, he made a tender of his heart, and was ready to conduct me to the altar, as soon as I would favour him with my hand. I asked three days to deliberate upon his proposal, and inform myself of his character; which was so engaging, that, although

[1] In Valencia, according to the Spanish saying, *la carne es yerba, la yerba agua, el hombre mujer, la mujer nada.*

I was not ignorant of his situation, I easily determined to marry him in a short time after.

'Don Manuel de Xerica (so my husband was called), carried me immediately to his castle, that had a very antique air, of which he was not a little vain. He pretended that one of his ancestors had caused it to be built; and from thence concluded, that there was not a more ancient house in Spain than that of Xerica. But this title of nobility, fair as it was, had like to have been destroyed by time; for the castle, which they were obliged to prop up in several parts, threatened immediate ruin. How happy, therefore, was Don Manuel in marrying me! more than half of my money was employed in reparations; and the rest served to put us in a condition of making a figure in the country. Behold me then (to use the expression) in a new world, changed into the nymph of a castle, and lady of a parish. Here was a metamorphosis! and I was too good an actress, not to support, with dignity, the splendour with which I was invested by my rank. I assumed lofty theatrical airs, which made the village conceive a high idea of my birth. How merry would they have been at my expense, had they known the truth of the matter! the nobility in the neighbourhood would have bestowed upon me a thousand taunts, and the peasants abated a great deal of the respect they showed.

'I had lived happily near six years with Don Manuel, when he died, leaving my affairs in great perplexity, with your sister Beatrice, then going in her fifth year. The castle, which was all the estate we had, was unluckily engaged to several creditors, the chief of whom was one Bernard Astuto[1], whose name seemed very well adapted to his character: he practised at Valencia the business of an attorney, which he exercised with consummate skill, having studied the law in order to qualify himself for cheating with the greater dexterity. What a terrible creditor he was! a castle under the claws of such an attorney, is like a pigeon in the

[1] *Astuto*=cunning.

talons of a kite. Accordingly, Señor Astuto, as soon as he understood the death of my husband, did not fail to besiege the castle, which he would undoubtedly have blown up, by the mines that chicanery began to prepare; had not my good genius interposed, and ordered it so as that my besieger became my slave. I had the good fortune to captivate him, during an interview we had on the subject of the lawsuit. I spared nothing, I own, to inspire him with a passion for me: the desire of saving my land, made me practise upon him all those languishing airs which had often succeeded so well. Notwithstanding all my art, I was afraid of being baffled by the attorney, who was so engulfed in business, that he did not seem susceptible of an amorous impression. Nevertheless, this sullen, awkward scrawler, took more pleasure in looking at me, than I imagined. "Madam (said he), I know not how to make love: I have always applied to my profession so closely, as to neglect the methods and customs of gallantry; but, however, I am not ignorant of the essential part; and, therefore, to come to the point, I assure you, that if you will give me your hand, we will burn the whole proceedings; I will bubble the other creditors, who join in the suit against you: you shall enjoy the life-rent, and your daughter the property of the land." My own interest, and that of Beatrice, did not permit me to hesitate; I accepted the proposal, and the attorney kept his promise. He turned his arms against the rest of the creditors, and secured me in the possession of my castle; and this, perhaps, was the first time of his having befriended the widow and the orphan.

'I became, therefore, an attorney's wife, without ceasing to be lady of the parish. But this new marriage cost me the esteem of the gentry in Valencia. The women of fashion looked upon me as one who had degenerated, and therefore would not visit me; so that I was obliged to confine myself to an acquaintance among citizens: a circumstance that gave me some uneasiness at first; because I had been, for six years,

accustomed to correspond with none but ladies of distinction: but I soon consoled myself, and became acquainted with the wives of a scrivener and two attorneys, whose characters were pleasant enough; there was something ridiculous in their behaviour, that diverted me very much. These small gentry believed themselves ladies of some consideration. "Alas! (said I, sometimes, to myself, when I saw them forget themselves) this is the way of the world: every one thinks herself better than her neighbour. I imagined that actresses were the only people who did not know themselves; but I find that citizens' wives are not a whit more reasonable. I wish that, by way of punishment, they were obliged to keep in their houses the pictures of their grandfathers; in good faith they would not place them in the most remarkable apartment."

'After having been married four years, Señor Bernard Astuto fell sick, and died without children; so that, with what he had settled upon me at our marriage, and the money I was left in possession of, I found myself a rich widow, and had the reputation of being so. On this report, a Sicilian gentleman, whose name was Colifichini, resolved to attach himself to me, in order to ruin or espouse me, for he left me the choice. He had come from Palermo, to see Spain, and after having satisfied his curiosity, waited (as he said), at Valencia, for an opportunity of repassing into Sicily. This gentleman was not more than five-and-twenty years of age, genteelly shaped, though small; in short, I liked his appearance. He found means to speak with me in private, and I will frankly own, that I became madly fond of him, in our first interview. On his side, the little rogue seemed quite captivated by my charms; and I believe (God forgive me) we should have married one another immediately, had the attorney's death, which was still recent, permitted me to contract a new engagement so soon: but ever since I had fallen into the taste of matrimony, I maintained the punctilios of decorum.

'We agreed, therefore, to defer our marriage for some

time, out of decency: in the meantime, Colifichini continued his addresses, and his passion, far from abating, seemed to increase daily. The poor young man was not very well provided with cash; I perceived it, and he no longer wanted money: for, besides that I was almost twice his age, I remembered that I had laid the men under contribution, in my youth; and I looked upon what I now did as a restitution that acquitted my conscience. We waited, as patiently as we could, for the expiration of the time prescribed by custom, for women to remain in a state of widowhood; and then went to the altar, where we mutually bound ourselves in the indissoluble ties of wedlock: we afterwards returned to my castle, where, I may say, we lived two years, not so much like husband and wife, as like two tender lovers. But, alas! we were not destined to be long happy in one another, a fatal pleurisy robbed me of my dear Colifichini.'

Here I interrupted my mother, crying, 'How! madam, your third husband dead too! you must certainly be a very dangerous tenement.' 'What could I do, son? (answered Lucinda); was it in my power to prolong the days that heaven had numbered? If I have lost three husbands, I could not help it. Two of them I regretted very much: he for whom I had the least regard was the attorney; as I married him out of interest, I easily consoled myself for his death. But (added she), to return to Colifichini, I must tell you, that a few months after his decease, having a mind to go and see, with my own eyes, a country-house near Palermo, which he had assigned to me as a jointure, in our contract of marriage, I embarked, with my daughter, for Sicily; but we were taken in our passage, by the vessels of the Dey of Algiers, and conducted into this city. Happily for us you chanced to be on the spot, where we were put up to sale, otherwise we might have fallen into the hands of some barbarous master, who would have maltreated us, and under whom we might have passed our whole life in bondage, without your knowing anything of the matter.'

Such was my mother's narration; after which, gentlemen, I gave her the best apartment of my house, with the liberty of living as she should think proper; a permission that she relished very much. She had contracted such a habit of being in love, from the repeated attacks of that passion, that she must absolutely have either a husband or a gallant. At first she cast her eyes on some of my slaves; but Haly Pegelin, a Greek renegado, who came frequently to the house, soon engrossed her attention. She conceived a more violent passion for him, than ever she felt for Colifichini, and she was so much mistress of the art of pleasing, that she found the secret of charming him also. I winked at their intelligence, and thought of nothing then but my return into Spain. The Dey having already permitted me to fit out a vessel, to cruise and commit piracy, I was busied in making preparations; and eight days before they were finished, said to Lucinda, 'Madam, we shall depart from Algiers in a very little time, and lose sight of that place which you detest so much.'

My mother grew pale at these words, and remained speechless. At which being strangely surprised; 'What do I see, madam? (said I) what is the meaning of that consternation in your looks? you seem to be afflicted, rather than rejoiced at what I tell you! I thought I should have made you happy with the news of everything's being ready for our departure. Have you no longer any desire, then, of repassing into Spain?' 'None at all, son (answered my mother), I have had so much affliction in that kingdom, that I renounce it for ever.' 'What do I hear? (cried I, in a transport of grief) ah! say rather that love detaches you from it. O heavens! what a change is here! when you arrived in this city, every object that presented itself was odious to your eyes: but Haly Pegelin has altered your disposition.' 'I don't deny it (replied Lucinda). I love that renegado, whom I design to take for my fourth husband.' 'What an abandoned project! (said I, interrupting her, with horror) would you marry a

Mussulman ? You forget that you are a Christian ; or rather, you never were one but in name. Ah ! mother, what are you about to do ? you have resolved upon your own perdition, by voluntarily embracing that which I was compelled to do by necessity.'

I used many more arguments to dissuade her from her design ; but I harangued to no purpose : she had formed her resolution ; and not contented with following her own wicked inclination, and quitting me to live with that renegado, she wanted to carry Beatrice along with her also : but this I opposed. ' Ah, wretched Lucinda ! (said I to her) if nothing is able to restrain you, at least abandon yourself only, to the fury that possesses your imagination ; don't drag a young innocent creature to the precipice from which you intend to throw yourself.' Lucinda went away, without making any reply, and I believed, that a remaining ray of reason enlightened and hindered her from being obstinate in demanding her daughter. But how little was I acquainted with my mother ! two days after, one of my slaves said to me, ' Señor, take care of yourself ; one of Pegelin's captives has imparted a thing to me, of which you cannot take the advantage too soon. Your mother has changed her religion, and to punish you, for having refused to let her carry off Beatrice, is resolved to inform the Dey of your intended flight.' I did not doubt one moment, that Lucinda was capable of doing what my slave mentioned : I had opportunities of studying the lady, and perceived that, by the habit of acting sanguinary parts in tragedies, she was so familiarized to guilt, that she could have caused me to be burnt alive, and, I believe, would have been no more affected with my death, than with the catastrophe of a dramatic performance.

Willing, therefore, not to neglect the advice of my slave, I hastened my embarkation, hired Turks, according to the custom of the corsairs of Algiers, when they go on a cruise ; but I hired no more than such as were necessary to keep me unsuspected, and set sail as soon as possible, with all my slaves, and my sister

Beatrice. You may well believe, that I did not forget to carry off, at the same time, all my jewels and money, which might amount to the value of six thousand ducats. When we got to sea, we began by securing the Turks, whom we easily chained, because my slaves were more numerous than they: and we had such a favourable wind, that in a little time we made the coast of Italy, and arrived, without the least bad accident, in the harbour of Leghorn, where, I believe, the whole city crowded to see us come ashore. The father of my slave Azarini being among the spectators, by accident or curiosity, surveyed all the captives with great attention, as they disembarked; but though he sought among them the features of his son, he little expected to see him again. What transports and embraces were the consequence of their meeting, when they recollected one another!

As soon as Azarini had told his father who I was, and what brought me to Leghorn, the old man obliged me as well as Beatrice to lodge at his house. I shall pass over in silence the detail of a thousand things that I was obliged to perform, in being readmitted into the bosom of the Church; and only observe, that I abjured Mohammedanism much more heartily than I had embraced it. After having entirely purged myself of the gall of Algiers, I sold my vessel, and set all my slaves at liberty; as for the Turks, they were detained in prison at Leghorn, in order to be exchanged for Christians. I received the best of treatment from both of the Azarinis, the younger of whom married my sister Beatrice, who was indeed no bad match for him, being a gentleman's daughter, and heiress of the castle of Xerica, which my mother had taken care to farm out to a rich peasant of Paterna, when she resolved upon her passage into Sicily.

Having stayed some time at Leghorn, I set out for Florence, which I longed much to see; and whither I did not go without letters of recommendation. Azarini the father had friends at the Grand Duke's court, to whom he introduced me as a Spanish gentle-

man his ally; and I prefixed Don to my name, imitating in that a great many Spanish plebeians, who, when they are out of their own country, assume that title of honour without ceremony[1]. I boldly, therefore, called myself Don Raphael; and as I had brought from Algiers a sufficiency to support my dignity, appeared at court in a splendid manner. The gentleman to whom Azarini had written in my favour, gave out that I was a person of quality; so that his testimony, together with the airs I assumed, made me easily pass for a man of importance. I soon got acquainted with the principal noblemen, who presented me to the Grand Duke, whom I had the good fortune to please: upon which, I bent my whole endeavour to make my court to that prince, and study his disposition. I listened attentively to what the oldest courtiers said to him; and by their discourse discovered his inclinations. Among other things I observed that he loved raillery, good stories, and sallies of wit. I modelled myself accordingly; and every morning marked in my pocket-book the stories I designed for the day. I had such a number of them in my memory, that my budget might be said to have been full; and yet, in spite of all my management, it was emptied apace, in such a manner, that I should either have been obliged to use repetition, or show that I was at the end of my apophthegms; if my genius, fruitful in fiction, had not furnished me with abundance. But I composed tales of gallantry and humour, that were very entertaining to the Grand Duke; and as it often happens with possessed wits, in the morning I invented bright expressions, which I uttered as unpremeditated sallies in the afternoon.

I even elevated myself into a poet, and consecrated my muse to the praise of the prince. I freely own, indeed, that my verse was none of the best, therefore not much criticized: but had it been better, I question if it would have been better received by the Grand

[1] Sancho Panza reported that some of Don Quixote's neighbours objected to the assumption of the 'Don' by the Ingenious Gentleman (*Don Quixote*, Part II, Chapter ii.).

Duke, who seemed very well satisfied with my talents; the matter, perhaps, hindered him from finding fault. Be that as it will, this prince insensibly took such a liking to me, as gave umbrage to the courtiers. They endeavoured to discover who I was, but did not succeed. Getting notice, however, that I had been a renegado, they did not fail to inform the prince of it, in hopes of injuring my character. But this they could not accomplish; on the contrary, the Grand Duke, one day, obliged me to give him a faithful narration of my voyage to Algiers; I obeyed, and my adventures, which I did not at all disguise, afforded him infinite pleasure.

'Don Raphael (said he, when I had finished the narration), I have a regard for you, and will give you a mark of it, which will not permit you to doubt of my friendship. I will make you the depositary of my secrets; and to begin with an instance of my confidence, I must tell you that I am in love with the wife of one of my ministers. She is the most amiable lady of my court, but, at the same time, the most virtuous: shut up amidst her family, and solely attached to a husband whom she adores, she seems ignorant of the noise her charms make in Florence. Judge you if this must not be a difficult conquest. Nevertheless, this beauty, inaccessible as she is to lovers, has deigned, sometimes, to hear my sighs: I have found means to speak to her in private, and acquaint her with the sentiments of my heart; but I don't flatter myself with the hope of having inspired her with mutual love: she has never given me cause to form such an agreeable idea: I don't however, despair of pleasing her by my assiduity and the mysterious conduct I shall take care to observe.

'My passion for that lady (added he) is known to nobody but herself; for, instead of consulting my inclination without constraint, and acting the sovereign, I conceal the knowledge of my flame from all the world —a piece of delicacy which I think I owe to Mascarini, the husband of her I love. His zeal, attachment, services, and probity oblige me to conduct myself with

great secrecy and circumspection. I would not plunge a dagger into the bosom of that unhappy husband, by declaring myself the lover of his wife; but wish that he may always remain ignorant, if possible, of the flame that consumes me: for, I am persuaded that he would die of grief, if he knew the confidence I now repose in you. I conceal my steps, therefore, and am resolved to make use of you, in expressing to Lucretia all the pangs I suffer, by the constraint which she imposes upon me: you shall be the interpreter of my sentiments, and I don't at all doubt that you will acquit yourself of the commission, to a miracle. Contract an acquaintance with Mascarini, endeavour to gain his friendship, insinuate yourself into his house, and procure the liberty of conversing with his wife. This is what I expect of you, and what I assure myself, you will perform with all the discretion and address that such a delicate employment requires.'

I promised to do all that lay in my power, to justify the confidence he honoured me with, and contribute to the success of his flame: and soon kept my word with him; I spared nothing to please Mascarini, and accomplished my end with ease. Charmed to find his friendship courted by a man who was beloved of his prince, he met my advances half-way: his house was open to me; I had free access to his lady, and, I dare say, behaved myself so well, that he had not the least suspicion of the negotiation entrusted to my care. 'Tis true, indeed, for an Italian, he was not much addicted to jealousy; he depended upon the virtue of Lucretia, and shutting himself up in his closet, left me frequently alone with her. I went roundly to work, the very first opportunity; entertained the lady with the passion of the Grand Duke, and told her that my sole design in coming to her house, was to talk to her of that prince. She did not seem captivated by him; and yet, I perceived that her vanity hindered her from rejecting his addresses: she took pleasure in hearing them, without feeling any inclination to answer his desires. She did not want understanding; but she was

a woman, and I observed that her virtue yielded insensibly to the superb idea of a sovereign in her chains. In short, the prince had reason to flatter himself, that without employing the violence of a Tarquin, he would see Lucretia subjected to his love. An accident, however, which he little expected, destroyed his hope, as you shall presently hear.

I am naturally impudent among women, having acquired that qualification, I know not whether it be good or bad, among the Turks: Lucretia was handsome, and I, forgetting that I was only to act the part of an ambassador, talked to her on my own score, offering my services with all the gallantry I was master of. Instead of being shocked at my audaciousness, and replying in a rage, she said, with a smile, 'You must own, Don Raphael, that the Grand Duke has made choice of a very faithful and zealous minister, who serves him with an integrity never enough to be commended.' 'Madam (said I, with the same air), don't let us examine things scrupulously; but lay aside those reflections, which (I know very well) are not at all favourable to me. I abandon myself to my passion; and after all, don't believe myself the first confidant of a prince, who has betrayed his master in affairs of gallantry; for the great have often dangerous rivals in their messengers of pleasure.' 'That may be (replied Lucretia), but as for my part, I am so high-spirited, that nobody under the degree of a prince, shall ever make an impression upon my heart. Conduct yourself accordingly (added she, growing serious), and let us change the discourse. I am willing to forget what you have said, on condition that you shall never talk to me again in the same manner; otherwise you may chance to repent it.'

Although this was a warning, of which I ought to have taken the advantage, I did not leave off entertaining Mascarini's wife with my passion: I even pressed her with more ardour than ever, to make suitable returns to my tenderness, and was rash enough to take liberties. Upon which the lady, being af-

fronted at my discourse and Mussulman behaviour, checked me abruptly, threatened to make the Grand Duke acquainted with my insolence, and assured me, that she would desire him to punish me, as I deserved. I was piqued, in my turn, at these menaces; my love changed into hate; and determined to be revenged upon Lucretia, for her contempt, I went in quest of her husband, whom, after he had sworn that he would not expose me, I informed of the correspondence between his wife and the prince, not forgetting to paint her very amorous, in order to make the scene more interesting. The minister, to prevent all accidents, shut up his spouse, without any other form of process, in a secret apartment, where she was guarded by people on whom he could rely. While she was thus surrounded by spies, who hindered her from informing the Grand Duke of her situation, I told that prince, with a melancholy air, that he must no more think of Lucretia; that Mascarini had, doubtless, discovered the whole affair, since he had taken it into his head to watch his wife; that I could not imagine what had alarmed his suspicion of me, for I thought I had always behaved with a good deal of address; that the lady, perhaps, had confessed the whole to her husband, in concert with whom, she had allowed herself to be locked up, in order to avoid those importunities which alarmed her virtue. The prince seemed very much afflicted at my report; I was touched with his grief, and repented more than once of what I had done; but it was too late: besides, I confess that I felt a malicious joy, when I represented to myself the condition to which I had reduced the proud woman who had disdained my passion.

I enjoyed, with impunity, the pleasure of revenge, which is so sweet to all the world, and in particular to Spaniards, when the Grand Duke being one day in company with five or six of his courtiers and me, said, 'In what manner do you think a man ought to be punished, who has dared to abuse the confidence of his prince, and attempted to deprive him of his mistress?' 'He ought (said one) to be tied to the tails of four

horses, and torn to pieces.' Another was of opinion, that he should be mauled to death. The least cruel of those Italians, and he whose sentence was most favourable to the delinquent, said, 'That he would be satisfied with causing him to be thrown from the top of a high tower.' 'And what is the opinion of Don Raphael? (resumed the Grand Duke). I am persuaded that the Spaniards are as severe as the Italians in such conjectures.'

I easily comprehended, as you may believe, that Mascarini had not kept his oath; or that his wife had found means to apprise the prince of what had passed between her and me; and my confusion appeared plain on my countenance. Nevertheless, disconcerted as I was, I answered, with a resolute tone, 'Sir, the Spaniards are more generous; they would pardon the confidant, on such an occasion, and, by their goodness, raise in his soul an eternal regret for having betrayed them.' 'Well (said the prince), I find myself capable of such generosity. I pardon the traitor: for I have none but myself to blame for having bestowed my confidence upon a man whom I did not know, and whom I had reason to distrust, after what I had heard of his character. Don Raphael (added he), this is the manner in which I will avenge myself: quit my dominions immediately, and let me never see your face again.' I withdrew on the instant, not so much afflicted at my disgrace, as rejoiced at coming off so cheaply; and the very next day embarked in a vessel that sailed from Leghorn, on its return to Barcelona.

I interrupted Don Raphael in this part of his history, by saying, 'For a man of understanding, methinks you committed a great blunder in neglecting to leave Florence, immediately after the discovery you made to Mascarini, of the prince's passion for Lucretia; you should have concluded, that the Grand Duke would soon come to the knowledge of your infidelity.' 'I grant it (replied the son of Lucinda), and notwithstanding the assurance which the minister gave me, of

not exposing me to the resentment of the prince, I proposed to disappear in a very short time.'

I arrived at Barcelona (continued he), with the remainder of the wealth I had brought from Algiers, the best part of which I had dissipated at Florence, in the character of the Spanish gentleman. I did not stay long in Catalonia: for, having a longing desire to revisit Madrid, the charming place of my nativity, I satisfied, as soon as possible, the desire that impelled me. When I arrived in that city, I took furnished lodgings, by accident, at a house where a lady lived, whose name was Camilla, and who, though no minor, was a very engaging creature. I take Señor Gil Blas to witness, who saw her, much about that time, at Valladolid. She had still more wit than beauty, and never had a she-adventurer better talents for decoying dupes: but she was none of those coquettes, who lay up the acknowledgements of their gallants: when she had pillaged a man of business, she shared his spoils with the first sharper she found to her liking.

We loved one another at first sight; and the conformity of our manners joined us so closely, that we soon had everything in common. Our fortunes, indeed, were not very considerable, and therefore we spent them in a very little time. Neither of us, unluckily, minded anything but our pleasure, or made the least use of the talents we had, to live at our neighbour's expense. But misery, at last, awakened our geniuses, which pleasure had benumbed: and Camilla said to me, 'My dear Raphael, let us make a diversion, my friend, and renounce a fidelity that ruins us both: you may captivate a rich widow, and I may charm some nobleman: for if we continue faithful to one another, here will be two fortunes lost.' 'Fair Camilla (I replied), you have anticipated me; I was going to make the same proposal to you. I assent to your scheme, my queen: yes, for the better support of our mutual flame, let us attempt advantageous conquests: the infidelities we shall commit, will turn to triumphs in the end.'

This convention being made, we took the field, and made considerable motions at first, without being able to encounter what we sought. Camilla could light upon none but beaux; that is to say, gallants who had not a penny in their pockets: and I could meet with no women, but such as loved better to levy contributions than pay them. As our arts were useless in love, we had recourse to stratagems, and performed so many, that our fame reached the ears of the corregidor; and that judge, who was undeniably severe, ordered one of his alguazils to apprehend us; but this officer being as good-natured as the other was cruel, gave us time to quit Madrid, in consideration of a small sum which we bestowed upon him. We took the road to Valladolid, and fixed in that city, having hired a house, in which I lived with Camilla, who passed for my sister, to avoid scandal. At first, we kept our industry under the rein, and began to study the ground, before we should form any enterprise.

One day, a man accosting me in the street, saluted me very civilly, saying, 'Señor Don Raphael, do you know me?' I answered, 'No.' Upon which he resumed: 'But I recollect you: I have seen you at the court of Tuscany, where I then belonged to the Grand Duke's guards. I quitted the service of that prince some months ago, and am come to Spain with an Italian of great finesse: we have been three weeks at Valladolid, and lodge with a Castilian and Galician, who are, without contradiction, two young fellows of honour. We live together by the work of our hands, make good cheer, and amuse ourselves like princes: if you will join us, you shall be agreeably received by my confederates: for you always seemed to me to be a gallant man, of a disposition not addicted to scruples, and a professed brother of our order.'

The rogue's frankness excited mine. 'Since you speak to me with so little reserve (said I to him), it is but reasonable that I should explain myself, in the same manner, to you. Indeed, I am not a novice in your profession; and if my modesty would allow me

to recount my exploits, you would see that you have not judged too advantageously of my talents: but I will forbear to launch out in my own praise, and content myself with assuring you, while I accept that place in your company which is offered, that I will neglect nothing to approve myself worthy of your choice.' As soon as I signified, to this ambidexter[1], my consent to augment the number of his comrades, he conducted me to the place where they were, and introduced me to their acquaintance. It was here that I saw, for the first time, the illustrious Ambrose de Lamela. Those gentlemen examined me touching my skill in the mystery of appropriating to oneself, with address, the effects of another. They wanted to know if I understood the principles of their art; but I showed them a great many stratagems, which they did not know, and which acquired their admiration of my ability. They were still more astonished, when, despising the dexterity of my hand, as a thing too common, I told them that I excelled in tricks, which required the assistance of genius. To convince them of this, I recounted the adventure of Jerome de Moyadas; and, upon the simple narration of that affair, they found me such a superior genius, that I was chosen their chief, by unanimous consent. I soon justified their choice, by an infinite number of knavish designs, which we put in practice, and of which I was, as it were, the informing soul. When we had occasion for an actress to carry on our projects, we made use of Camilla, who performed all her parts to admiration.

About that time, our brother Ambrose, being tempted to revisit his native country, set out for Galicia, assuring us, that we might depend upon his return. He satisfied his desire, and on his way back again, going to Burgos, with an intention of striking some stroke, an innkeeper of his acquaintance introduced him to the service of Señor Gil Blas de Santillana, with whose affairs he did not fail to make him

[1] *Ambidexter*=a dishonest vagabond.

acquainted. Señor Gil Blas (he added), addressing himself to me), you know how we rid you of your portmanteau, in our furnished lodgings at Valladolid: and I don't doubt that you suspected Ambrose of being the chief instrument of that theft. And you were in the right: for, at your arrival, he came and laid your situation before us, and we, the gentlemen undertakers, regulated ourselves accordingly. But you are ignorant of the consequences of that adventure, which I will, therefore, let you know. Ambrose and I carried off your portmanteau, and mounting your mules, took the road to Madrid, without encumbering ourselves with Camilla, or the rest of our comrades, who, without doubt, were as much surprised as you, at our non-appearance next day.

On the second day, we changed our design, and instead of going to Madrid, which I had not quitted without cause, we passed by Zebreros, and continued our route as far as Toledo. In this city, our first care was to dress ourselves like gentlemen; then giving ourselves out for two brothers of Galicia, who travelled out of curiosity, we soon became acquainted with persons of character. As I had been so much accustomed to act the man of quality, I was easily mistaken for such, and people being usually dazzled by expense, we imposed upon everybody, by the gallant treats we began to give to the ladies. Among the women whom I visited, there was one who touched my heart: I found her fairer than Camilla, and a good deal more young: I was desirous of knowing who she was, and learned that her name was Violante, and that her husband was a gentleman, who, cloyed already with her charms, pursued those of a courtesan, whom he loved. This piece of information was enough to determine me to establish Violante the sovereign lady of my affection.

It was not long before she perceived her conquest: I began to follow her everywhere, and commit a thousand impertinencies, to persuade her that I wanted nothing more, than to console her for the infidelity of

her spouse. The fair one made her reflections on the matter, which were such, that, at last, I had the pleasure of knowing her approbation of my sentiments. I received from her a billet, in answer to several which I had sent to her, by one of those old matrons, who are so serviceable in Spain and Italy. The lady gave me to understand that her husband supped every evening with his mistress, and did not come home before it was very late. That same night I went under the windows of Violante, and entered into a most tender conversation with her: after which, we agreed, at parting, to enjoy the same opportunity every night, at the same hour, without prejudice to the other acts of gallantry, which we should be permitted to exercise in the day.

Hitherto Don Balthazar, the husband of my princess, came off very cheaply; but I chose to love naturally, and repaired one evening under the lady's windows, with a design to tell her, that I could live no longer, if I did not enjoy a *tête-à-tête* with her, in a place more suitable to the excess of my love: an indulgence which I had not, as yet, been able to obtain. But just as I got to the place, I saw a man come into the street, who seemed to observe me: in effect, it was her husband, who returned from the courtesan earlier than usual, and who perceiving a cavalier near his house, instead of going in, walked to and fro in the street. I remained, for some time, unresolved, but, at last, determined to accost Don Balthazar, whom I did not know, and of whom I was also utterly unknown. 'Señor Cavalier (said I to him), pray leave the street free to me for one night: I will do as much for you another time.' 'Señor (he replied), I was going to make the same request to you: I am in love with a girl, whom her brother guards like a dragon, and who lives not above twenty paces from hence; so that I wish there was nobody in the street.' 'There is one way (said I) of satisfying us both, without incommoding either: for (added I, showing him his own house) the lady, whom I serve, lodges there; and let us assist

one another, if either of us should be attacked.' 'With all my heart (he replied), I will go to my rendezvous, and we will back one another, should there be occasion.' So saying, he left me; but it was in order to observe me the better, and this the darkness of the night permitted him to do with impunity.

As for my part, I approached, in security, the balcony of Violante, who soon appeared, and we began to converse together. I did not fail to insist upon my queen's granting me a private interview in some particular place. She resisted my importunities a little, to enhance the value of the favour which I demanded; then dropping a letter, which she took out of her pocket, 'Hold (said she), you will find, in this billet, the promise of what you so earnestly desire.' She afterwards withdrew, because the hour at which her husband usually returned, was at hand; upon which I secured the billet, and advanced to the place where Don Balthazar said he was concerned: but he having very well perceived what I wanted with his wife, came to me, saying, 'Well, Señor Cavalier, are you satisfied with your good fortune?' 'I have cause to be so (I replied); and what have you done? Has love favoured your addresses?' 'Ah no! (said he) the cursed brother of the beauty whom I love, is returned from a country-house, where I imagined he would stay till to-morrow; and this mischance has baulked me of the pleasure with which I flattered myself.'

Don Balthazar and I made mutual protestations of friendship; and to tie the knots of it the faster, made an appointment to meet next day, in the great square. After we parted, he went home, but mentioned not a word of what he knew to Violante. Next day he repaired to the great square, where I arriving a moment after him, we saluted one another with demonstrations of friendship, as perfidious on one side, as sincere on the other. Then Don Balthazar made me the confidant of a feigned intrigue with the lady whom he had mentioned the preceding night: recounting a

long story that he had invented, in order to engage me, in my turn, to tell him in what manner I had become acquainted with Violante. I did not fall into the snare, and confess all with the utmost frankness: I even showed the letter which I had received from her, and read the contents in these words:

'I shall dine to-morrow with Doña Inés: you know where she lives: 'tis in the house of that faithful friend, that I intend to give you a private interview; for I can no longer refuse that favour, which you seem to deserve.'

'This (said Don Balthazar) is a billet which promises you the accomplishment of your wish; I congratulate you beforehand, on the happiness that attends you.' He could not help being a little disconcerted while he said this; but he easily concealed his trouble and confusion from me. I was so much engrossed by my hope, that I never thought of observing my confidant, who was obliged, however, to leave me, that I might not at last perceive his agitation. He ran to apprise his brother-in-law of this adventure: but I am ignorant of what passed between them: all I know of the matter, is, that Don Balthazar came and knocked at the door while I was with Violante, at the house of Doña Inés: and as soon as we learned that it was he, I escaped at a back-door before he came in. As soon as I was gone, the ladies whom the unforeseen arrival of the husband had disconcerted, recollected themselves, and received him with such effrontery, that he suspected I was either concealed, or had made my escape. I cannot tell what he said to Doña Inés and his wife, because it never came to my knowledge.

Meanwhile, without suspecting that I was Don Balthazar's dupe, I went away, cursing him, and returned to the great square where I had appointed to meet Lamela. I did not find him, however; he had little affairs of his own to manage; and the rogue was more fortunate than I. While I waited for him, I

saw my perfidious confidant arrive, who came up to me with a gay air, and smiling, asked news of my interview with my nymph at the house of Doña Inés. 'I don't know (said I) what demon, jealous of my pleasures, delights in thwarting them: but while I was alone with my lady, pressing her to make me happy, her husband, whom the devil confound! came and knocked at the door: so that being obliged to get off as fast as I could, I retired by a back-door, cursing to hell the troublesome cuckold who broke all my measures.' 'I am truly sorry for it (cried Don Balthazar, who felt a secret joy in seeing my vexation), what an impertinent husband must he be! I advise you to give him no quarter.' 'Oh! as for that (I replied), I will take your advice: and I can assure you that his honour shall make its exit this night: his wife, when I left her, bade me not be discouraged at so small a matter: but be sure to come under her window, earlier than usual, for she was resolved to admit me into her house: and desired me, at all events, to come attended with two or three friends, for fear of surprise.' 'What a prudent lady she is! (said he) I will, if you please, accompany you thither.' 'Ah, my dear friend! (cried I, in a transport of joy, while I threw my arms around his neck) I am infinitely obliged to you.' 'I will do more (he resumed), I am acquainted with a young fellow who is another Caesar; he shall be of the party, and then you may boldly confide in your escort.'

I did not know what acknowledgments to make to this new friend, so much was I charmed with his zeal. In short, I accepted the succour which he offered, and appointing to meet in the twilight under Violante's balcony, we parted for that time. He went to find his brother-in-law, who was the Caesar in question; and I took a turn till the evening, with Lamela, who (though he was surprised at the ardour with which Don Balthazar espoused my interest), distrusted him no more than I: we fell nodding into the snare, which, I own, was unpardonable in

people of our experience. When I thought it was time to present myself before Violante's window, Ambrose and I appeared upon the spot, armed with good rapiers; and there we found the lady's husband, with another man, waiting for us, without flinching. Don Balthazar accosting me, and showing his brother-in-law, said, 'Señor, this is the cavalier whose bravery I extolled so much. Get into the house of your mistress, and let not any anxiety hinder you from enjoying the most perfect felicity.'

After some mutual compliments, I knocked at my nymph's door, which being opened by a kind of duenna, I entered, and without taking notice of what passed behind me, advanced into a hall where Violante was. While I saluted the lady, the two traitors who had followed me into the house, and shut the door so hastily after them that Ambrose was left in the street, discovered themselves. You may easily imagine that we then came to blows. Both of them charged me at once; but I found them work enough, and employed them in such a manner, that perhaps they repented they had not chose a surer conveyance for their revenge. I ran the husband through the body, and his brother-in-law seeing him out of the question, got to the door, which the duenna and Violante had opened to make their escape, while we were engaged. I pursued him into the street, where I rejoined Lamela, who not being able to extract one word from the women in their flight, did not precisely know what to think of the noise he had heard. We returned to the tavern where we lodged, secured our most valuable effects, and mounting our mules, rode out of the city, without waiting for day.

Knowing very well that this affair might have bad consequences, and that a search would be made at Toledo, which we were in the right to anticipate, we went to bed at Villarubia, at an inn, where, some time after, a merchant of Toledo arrived, in his way to Segorba. As we supped in his company, he recounted the tragical adventure of Violante's husband, and was

so far from suspecting us to be concerned, that we boldly asked of him all manner of questions about the affair. 'Gentlemen (said he), just as I set out this morning, I heard of the melancholy accident. Search was made everywhere for Violante, and I was told that the corregidor, who is related to Don Balthazar, has resolved to spare nothing in discovering the murderers. This is all I know of the matter.'

Though I was not much alarmed at the search of the corregidor, I resolved to quit New Castile immediately: reflecting that when Violante should be found, she would confess all, and on her description of my person to the judge, people would be sent in pursuit of me. For this reason, the very next day, we avoided the highway, through precaution: Lamela being luckily acquainted with three-fourths of Spain, and particularly with the by-ways through which we could securely repair into Aragon. Instead of going straight to Cuenca, we kept among the mountains adjacent to that city; and through paths that were not unknown to my guide, arrived at a grotto which looked very much like a hermitage; and indeed, it was the same to which you came last night, for an asylum.

While I was considering the country around, which presented to my view a most charming rural prospect, my companion said to me, 'I passed by this place six years ago, at which time, that grotto served as a retreat to an old hermit who gave me a very charitable reception; entertaining me with a share of his provisions: I remember that he was a very holy man, and harangued me with a discourse that had almost detached me from the world: perhaps, he is still alive: I will go and see.' So saying, the curious Ambrose alighted from his mule, and entered the hermitage, where having stayed some minutes, he returned, calling to me, 'Come hither, Don Raphael—come and see a very affecting scene.'

I alighted immediately, and tying our mules to a tree, followed Lamela into the grotto, where I perceived an old anchorite, pale and dying, stretched at

his full length upon a truckle-bed. A white beard, very bushy, covered his whole breast; and in his hands clasped together, appeared a large, twisted rosary. At the noise we made in approaching him, he opened his eyes, which death had already begun to close, and after having looked at us for a moment, said, 'Whosoever you are, my brethren, profit by the spectacle that now presents itself to your eyes: I have lived forty years in the world, and sixty in this solitude. Ah! how long, at this moment, seems the time which I have bestowed on my pleasures: and on the contrary, how short does that appear which I have consecrated to penitence and devotion. Alas! I am afraid that the austerities of Brother John have not sufficiently expiated the sins of the Licentiate Don Juan de Solis.'

He had no sooner spoke these words than he expired, leaving us very much affected with his death. These sorts of objects always make some impression even on the greatest libertines. But we did not retain it long: we soon forgot what he had said to us, and began to take an inventory of everything in the hermitage: an employment not very laborious; all his furniture consisting in what you may have observed in the grotto. Brother John was not only ill provided with furniture but also kept a very bad larder: for, all the provision we found, was a few filberts, and some crusts of barley-bread, so hard as to be, in all appearance, proof against the gums of the holy man. I say, his gums; because we observed, that he had lost all his teeth. All that this solitary habitation contained, and all that we beheld, made us regard the good anchorite as a perfect saint. We were shocked, indeed, at one thing: we opened a paper folded in form of a letter, which he had laid upon the table, and in which he begged that the person who should read it, would carry his rosary and sandals to the Bishop of Cuenca. We did not know with what intention this new father of the desert could desire to to make such a present to his Bishop. This seemed

an outrage against humility, and the behaviour of a man who wanted to set up for canonization. And perhaps, there was nothing in it, but pure simplicity: for I don't pretend to decide the matter.

While we discoursed together on this subject, a pleasant thought came into Lamela's head. 'Let us stay (said he) in this hermitage, and disguise ourselves like anchorites, having first buried Brother John. You shall pass for him, and I under the name of Brother Antonio, will go a-begging in the neighbouring towns and villages. Besides our being secure from the inquiries of the corregidor (for I don't believe he will think of searching for us here), I have some good acquaintance at Cuenca, which we may cultivate.' I approved of this extravagant proposal, not so much for Ambrose's reasons, as out of pure whim, or a desire of acting a part in a play. About thirty or forty paces from the grotto, we dug a grave, in which we modestly interred the old anchorite, after having stripped him of his clothes; that is, a simple robe tied about his middle with a leathern girdle: we likewise cut off his beard, to make a false one for me; and in short, after having performed his funeral, took possession of the hermitage.

We fared poorly the first day, being obliged to live on the provisions of the defunct; but next morning, before day, Lamela set out in order to sell the two mules at Toralva, and returned in the evening loaded with victuals, and the other things which he had purchased. He brought everything that was necessary for our transformation: he made for himself a russet gown and a little red beard of horse-hair, which he fixed so artificially to his ears, that one would have sworn it was the natural produce of his chin. There is not a more dexterous young fellow in the world than he; who likewise weaved the beard of Brother John, which he applied to my face, and my brown woollen cap served to cover the artifice; so that there was nothing wanting to our disguise. We found each other so pleasantly equipped, that we could not,

without laughing, behold ourselves in this dress, which truly was not very suitable to our real characters. Together with Brother John's robe, I wore his rosary and sandals, of which I made no scruple to deprive the Bishop of Cuenca.

We had been already three days in the hermitage, without seeing a soul appear; but on the fourth two peasants entered the grotto, bringing bread, cheese, and onions to the defunct, whom they still thought alive. As soon as I perceived them, I threw myself on my bed, and it was no difficult matter to deceive them: for, besides that there was not light enough to enable them to distinguish my features, I imitated as well as I could the voice of Brother John, whose last words I had heard; and they had no suspicion of the cheat: they seemed only surprised to meet another hermit there; which when Lamela perceived, he said with a hypocritical air, 'My brethren, be not surprised to see me in this solitude: I have quitted a hermitage I possessed in Aragon, to come hither and attend the venerable and discreet Brother John, who in his extreme old age has occasion for a comrade who can provide for his necessities.' The peasants gave infinite praise to the charity of Ambrose, and expressed great joy in being able to boast of having two holy personages in their country.

Lamela, with a large haversack, which he had not forgot to purchase, went a-begging for the first time in the city of Cuenca, which is but a small league from the hermitage. With a devout appearance which he had received from nature, and the art of taking advantage of it, which he possessed in a supreme degree, he did not fail to extort alms from charitable people, with whose liberalities he filled his haversack. 'Mr. Ambrose (said I to him at his return), I congratulate you upon your happy talent of melting the souls of Christians. Egad! one would think you had been a begging brother among the Capuchins.' 'I have done something else (answered he) than fill my haversack: you must know I have discovered a certain nymph called Barbara, whom I formerly loved, and whom I

have found strangely altered: she (like us) has turned devotee, and lives with two or three sisters of the same class, who edify the world in public, and in private lead scandalous lives. As she did not know me at first, "How! Madame Barbara (said I), is it possible that you do not recollect one of your old friends, your admirer Ambrose?" "By my faith! Señor de Lamela (cried she), I should never have expected to see you again in the habit you wear! By what adventure are you become hermit?" "I cannot tell you at present (I replied), the detail is somewhat long; but I will come back to-morrow to gratify your curiosity, and bring along with me my companion brother John!" "Brother John! (said she, interrupting me); what, the good anchorite who lives in the hermitage near this city? Sure you joke; they say, he is more than a hundred years old." "It is true (said I to her) that he was once of that age; but he has grown a great deal younger within these few days; and is at present no older than I." "Well, let him come along with you (replied Barbara), I see there is some mystery in the case."'

We did not fail the next day, as soon as it was dark, to go to the house of those bigots, who had prepared a sumptuous entertainment for our reception. We immediately took off our beards and hermits' dress, and without ceremony told them who we were. On their side, for fear of being indebted to us for our frankness, they showed what false devotees are capable of, when they banish grimace. We spent almost all the night at table, and did not retire to our grotto till the dawn. We returned thither again in a very short time; or rather, did the same thing (almost every day) during three months; in which time, we spent two-thirds of our money with these nymphs: but one being suspicious of our characters, discovered the whole, and has informed justice against us, which this day intended to visit the hermitage, and secure our persons. Yesterday Ambrose, while he was begging at Cuenca, met one of our sisters, who gave him a note, saying, 'One of my

friends wrote this letter to me, which I was going to send you by an express: show it to Brother John, and take your measures accordingly.' It was this billet, gentlemen, which Lamela delivered to me in your presence, and which has made us quit so suddenly our solitary habitation.

CHAPTER II

The council which Don Raphael held with his hearers, and the adventure which happened to them when they designed to quit the wood

When Don Raphael had ended his narration, which I thought a little tedious, Don Alphonso was so polite as to say it had diverted him very much. Then Señor Ambrose opened, and addressing himself to his fellow-adventurer, 'Don Raphael (said he), consider that the sun is set; it will be proper, methinks, to deliberate upon what we are to do.' 'You are in the right (replied his comrade), we must determine upon the place to which we go next.' 'It is my opinion (resumed Lamela) that we should set forward without loss of time, reach Requena this night, and to-morrow enter the kingdom of Valencia, where we will give the rein to our industry, and, I foresee, perform some successful strokes.' His confederate, who, on that subject, believed his presage infallible, assented to his opinion: as for Don Alphonso and me, leaving ourselves to the conduct of these honest people, we waited in silence the result of the conference.

It being therefore resolved that we should take the road to Requena, we began to prepare ourselves for the journey; we made another meal like that in the morning; and loading the horse with the wine-bag, and the remains of our provisions, the approach of night lent us that darkness which we needed for our most secure travelling, and we pushed forward to get out of the wood: but we had not gone a hundred yards, when we discovered among the trees a light that made

us very uneasy. 'What is the meaning of that? (said Don Raphael): perhaps the ferrets of justice have pursued us from Cuenca, understand that we are in this forest, and are come hither to search.' 'I don't believe that (said Ambrose), these are rather travellers, who being surprised by the night, have come into this wood to wait for day. But (added he) I may be mistaken. I will go and reconnoitre while you stay here, and I will be back in a moment.' So saying, he advanced towards the light, which was not far off, and approached it softly. Pushing gently by the leaves and boughs that were in his ways; and peeping with all the attention which the thing seemed to deserve, he saw on the grass, round a candle that stuck burning in a lump of clay, four men sitting, who had just dispatched a pie, and emptied a pretty large leathern bottle, which they embraced in their turns. He likewise perceived at some distance from them, a lady and gentleman tied to trees; and a little farther, a chaise with two mules richly caparisoned. He guessed at once that the men were robbers; and their discourse, which he overheard, assured him that he was not mistaken in his conjecture. The four banditti expressed an equal desire of possessing the lady who had fallen into their hands, and talked of casting lots for her. Lamela having fully informed himself of the matter, rejoined us, and made a faithful report of what he had seen and heard.

Upon which, Don Alphonso said, 'Gentlemen, that lady and cavalier whom the robbers have bound to trees, are perhaps persons of the first quality: and shall we suffer them to fall victims to the barbarity and brutality of thieves? Take my advice, let us attack these banditti, and put them all to death.' 'With all my heart (said Don Raphael), I am as ready to do a good as a bad action.' Ambrose, on his part, signified his willingness to lend a hand to such a laudable enterprise, 'for which (said he) I foresee we shall be well recompensed.' I dare likewise affirm, that on this occasion I was not at all afraid of the danger; and that no knight-errant ever showed more readiness to succour

damsels in distress. But not to conceal the truth, the danger was not great: for Lamela having reported that the arms of the robbers were all in a heap at the distance of ten or twelve paces from them, it was no difficult matter for us to execute our design. We tied our horse to a tree, and approached, as gently as possible, the place, where they were talking with great warmth, and making a noise that helped us to surprise them, we made ourselves masters of their arms before we were discovered; then firing a volley upon them, stretched them all breathless on the spot.

During this execution the light going out, we remained in darkness; but for all that, did not delay to untie the man and woman, who were so much engrossed by their fear, that they had not power to thank us for what we had done in their behalf. 'Tis true, indeed, they did not as yet know whether to look upon us as their deliverers, or as a new troop of banditti, who had not rescued them from the others with any intention to use them better. But we encouraged them, by protesting that we would conduct them to an inn, which Ambrose affirmed was not more than half a league from thence; and that they might there take all necessary precautions for their security, in going whither their affairs called them. After this assurance, with which they seemed very well satisfied, we replaced them in their chaise, and brought them out of the wood, leading the mules by the bridle. Our anchorites afterwards examined the pockets of the vanquished, took care of Don Alphonso's horse, secured those that belonged to the thieves, which we found tied to trees near the field of battle; and carrying them all off, followed Brother Antonio, who mounted one of the mules, in order to guide the chaise to the inn; at which, however, we did not arrive in less time than two hours, although he had assured us that it was not far from the wood.

Everybody in the house being a-bed, we knocked loudly at the door; upon which the landlord and his wife got up in a hurry, and were not sorry to see their rest interrupted by the arrival of an equipage, which

they thought would have spent more money than it did. The whole inn was lighted in a moment. Don Alphonso and the illustrious son of Lucinda offered their hands to help the cavalier and lady out of the chaise, and even served them as ushers to the chamber whither the landlord conducted them. There a great many compliments passed; and we were not a little astonished when we understood that it was the Count de Polan himself, and his daughter Seraphina, whom we had delivered. It is impossible to describe the surprise of that lady, as well as of Don Alphonso, when they recollected each other. The Count took no notice of it, so much was he otherwise engrossed in recounting to us in what manner the robbers had attacked him; and how they had seized his daughter and him, after having killed his postilion, page, and valet de chambre: he ended with telling us, that he had a deep sense of the obligation he lay under to us; and if we would come to him at Toledo, where he should be in a month, we should see whether or not he was ungrateful.

Nor did the daughter of this nobleman forget to thank us for her happy deliverance; and as Raphael and I imagined we should please Don Alphonso, by giving him an opportunity of talking a moment in private with that young widow, we gratified his desire, by amusing the Count de Polan. 'Fair Seraphina (said Don Alphonso to the lady, in a low voice), I will no longer complain of the fate that compels me to live like a man banished from civil society, since I have been so happy as to contribute to the important service which you have received.' 'How! (answered she, sighing) is it you who have saved my life and honour? Is it to you that my father and I are so much indebted? Ah! Don Alphonso! why did you kill my brother?' She said no more; but he easily perceived by these words, and the tone in which they were pronounced, that if he was violently in love with Seraphina, she was no less enamoured of him.

THE END OF THE FIFTH BOOK

BOOK VI

CHAPTER I

The conduct of Gil Blas and his companions, after they quitted the Count de Polan. The important project which Ambrose formed, and the manner in which it was executed

THE Count de Polan, having spent one half of the night in thanking and assuring us that we might depend upon his gratitude, called the landlord, in order to consult with him about the means of getting in safety to Turis, whither he designed to go. We left that nobleman to take his measures accordingly; and departing from the inn, followed the road that Lamela was pleased to choose.

After having travelled two hours, day surprised us near Campillo; upon which, we immediately betook ourselves to the mountains, which are passed between that village and Requena, and there passed the day in reposing ourselves, and counting our finances, which were a good deal increased by the money of the robbers; for above three hundred pistoles were found in their pockets. As soon as it was dark, we set forward again, and next morning entered the kingdom of Valencia. We retired to the first wood that presented itself to our view; and pushing a good way into it arrived at a place through which a rivulet of crystalline water gently glided in its way to join the streams of Guadalaviar. The shade projected by the trees, and the grass which the place afforded in abundance to our horses, would have determined us to halt here, even if we had not been resolved upon it before. We alighted,

therefore, and prepared to pass the day very agreeably; but when we went to breakfast, found very little provision left. We began to want bread, and our bottle was become a body without a soul. 'Gentlemen (said Ambrose), the most charming retreats are but disagreeable without Bacchus and Ceres; our provision must be renewed: I will for that purpose go to Xelva, a handsome town not above two leagues from hence; so that the journey will soon be finished.' So saying, he fixed the bottle and haversack on one of the horses, and mounting atop of them, went out of the wood with a dispatch that promised a speedy return.

He did not come back, however, so soon as we expected: more than half of the day elapsed, and night was ready to cover the trees with her sooty wings, when we beheld our purveyor, whose stay had begun to give us some uneasiness. He exceeded our expectation by the quantity of things with which he returned loaded; he brought not only the leathern bottle filled with excellent wine, and the knapsack crammed with bread and all sorts of roasted venison, but also a great bundle of cloth, which we observed with a good deal of attention. He perceived our admiration, and said with a smile, 'I defy Don Raphael, and all the world together, to guess why I have purchased these things.' Saying these words, he loosed the bundle, to show the particulars of what we had observed in the gross. He displayed a cloak, and very long black robe, two doublets with their hose; one of those inkhorns which are composed of two pieces tied together by a string, the horn of which is separated from the pen-case; a quire of fine white paper, and a padlock with a large seal and green wax; and when he had exhibited his whole purchase, Don Raphael said to him in a jocular way, 'Egad, Mr. Ambrose, it must be confessed you have made a fine bargain. What use, if you please, do you intend to make of it?' 'An admirable one (replied Lamela); all these things have cost me but ten doubloons; and I am persuaded that they will bring us in more than five hundred: you may depend

upon it, I am none of those who encumber themselves with useless effects ; and to convince you that I did not buy all this like a fool, I will communicate the project I have formed.'

'Having furnished myself with bread (added he), I went into a cook's shop, where I ordered six partridges, as many pullets and young rabbits, to be put to the fire ; and while they were doing, a man came into the shop in a rage, and loudly complaining of the behaviour of a merchant in town, said to the cook, "By Santiago ! Samuel Simon is the most ridiculous merchant in Xelva ; he has affronted me in open shop ; the covetous wretch would not give me credit for six ells of cloth, though he knows very well that I am a responsible tradesman, and that he can lose nothing by me. Is he not a strange animal ? He sells willingly on credit to people of quality, and had rather venture with them, than oblige an honest citizen without any risk. Was there ever such madness ? Damned Jew ! would he were taken in ! My wish will be one day accomplished. There are merchants enough of my opinion."'

Hearing the tradesman speak in this manner, and say a great many other things of the same nature, I had a certain forewarning that I could cheat this Samuel Simon. 'Friend (said I to the man who complained), what is the character of this person whom you mention ?' 'A very bad one (answered he hastily), I assure you he is a rank usurer, though he affects the manners of a benevolent man. He was a Jew, and turned Catholic ; but in his heart, he is still as much a Jew as ever Pilate was[1] : for, they say, he abjured for interest.'

I lent an attentive ear to all the discourse of the tradesman ; and did not fail, when I came out of the cook's shop, to inquire for Samuel Simon's house. A person showed it to me ; I surveyed his shop, examined everything ; and my imagination, ready at call,

[1] The assumption is that the Governor of Judaea was necessarily a Jew.

sketched out a stratagem which I digested, and which appeared worthy of the valet of Señor Gil Blas. I went to a broker's, where I bought these clothes; one suit for acting an inquisitor, another to represent a scrivener, and the third for playing the part of an alguazil.

'Ah, my dear Ambrose! (cried Don Raphael, interrupting him, in a transport of joy) what a wonderful idea! what a glorious plan! I am jealous of the invention, and would willingly give up the greatest strokes of my life to be thought the author of such a happy scheme! Yes, Lamela (added he), I see all the richness of thy design, the execution of which ought to give thee no uneasiness. Thou hast occasion for two good actors to second thee, and they are already found. Thou, who hast the air of a devotee, wilt act the inquisitor very well; I will represent the secretary, and Señor Gil Blas (if he pleases) shall play the part of an alguazil: thus (continued he) are the cues distributed: to-morrow we will act the piece, and I'll answer for its success, unless some of those unlucky accidents happen, which confound the best concerted designs.'

I conceived as yet but very confusedly the project which Don Raphael liked so much; but the whole was explained to me at supper, and the trick seemed ingenious. After having dispatched part of our venison, and made our leathern bottle undergo a copious evacuation, we stretched ourselves upon the grass, and were asleep in a very short time. 'Get up, get up (cried Señor Ambrose, at daybreak), people who have great enterprises to execute ought not to be lazy.' 'Deuce take you, Mr. Inquisitor (said Don Raphael), how alert you are! that bodes no good to Master Simon.' 'I grant it (replied Lamela), and will moreover tell you, I dreamed this night, that I plucked the hairs from his beard. Is not that a villainous dream for him, Mr. Secretary?' These jokes were followed by a thousand more, which put us all in good humour: we made a cheerful breakfast, and then prepared for acting our several parts. Ambrose put on the long gown and

cloak, which gave him all the air of a commissary of the Holy Office: Don Raphael and I dressed ourselves likewise, so as to bear a pretty good resemblance to a secretary and alguazil. We employed a good deal of time in disguising ourselves; and it was past two o'clock in the afternoon when we quitted the wood, and set out for Xelva. 'Tis true, indeed, we were in no hurry, as our comedy would not begin before the twilight: we therefore went at a very slow pace, and stopping at the city-gate, waited there till night.

As soon as it was dark, we left our horses in this place to the care of Don Alphonso, who was very glad that he had no other part to perform. Don Raphael, Ambrose, and I, went immediately into a publican's in the neighbourhood; and Mr. Inquisitor going foremost, said to the landlord with great gravity, 'Master, I want to talk with you in private.' The landlord carried us into a parlour, where Lamela finding him alone with us, said, 'I am commissary of the Holy Office, come hither upon a very important affair.' At these words the publican grew pale, and replied with a faltering voice, that he hoped he had given no cause of complaint to the Holy Inquisition: 'Therefore (replied Ambrose), it has no intention to give you any trouble: God forbid that, too prompt to punish, it should confound innocence with guilt; it is severe, but always just: in a word, one must deserve its chastisements before he feels them. It was not you who brought me to Xelva, but a certain merchant called Samuel Simon, of whom we have received a very bad report: it is said that he is still a Jew, and embraced Christianity through motives purely carnal. I order you, therefore, in the name of the Holy Office, to tell me what you know of that man. Beware of excusing him, on account of his being your neighbour, and perhaps your friend; for I declare, if I perceive in your evidence the least reserve, you yourself are a lost man. Come, secretary (added he, turning to Raphael), do your duty.'

Mr. Secretary, who already had his paper and inkhorn in his hand, sat down at a table, and prepared,

with the most serious air in the world, to write the deposition of the landlord; who, on his part, protested that he would not betray the truth. 'Well then (said the commissary inquisitor to him), let us begin: answer only to my questions; I ask no more. Do you see Samuel Simon frequent the church?' ''Tis what I have not observed (said the publican), I don't remember to have seen him at church.' 'Good! (cried the inquisitor). Write, that he is never seen at church.' 'I don't say so, Mr. Commissary (replied the landlord), I only say, that I never saw him there: he may be in the same church with me, though I don't perceive him.' 'Friend (said Lamela), you forget that you must not, in your examination, excuse Samuel Simon: I have told you the consequences of it. You must mention only those things that are against him, and not one word in his favour.' 'If that be the case, Señor Licentiate (resumed the landlord), you can't reap much from my deposition; I am not acquainted with the merchant in question; therefore can say neither good nor ill of him: but if you want to know how he lives in his own family, I will go and call Gaspar, his 'prentice, whom you may interrogate: he comes here sometimes, to make merry with his friends; and such a tongue! he will discover the whole life and conversation of his master, and I warrant it, find employment enough for your secretary.'

'I like your frankness (said Ambrose), and you show your zeal for the Holy Office, by informing me of a man acquainted with the morals of Simon. I will report you to the Inquisition. Make haste, then (continued he), and bring hither that same Gaspar, whom you mention. But do things discreetly, that his master may have no suspicion of what passes.' The publican acquitted himself of his commission, with great secrecy and diligence, and brought along with him the merchant's 'prentice, who was just such a very talkative young fellow as we wanted. 'Welcome, child (said Lamela to him), you see, in me, an inquisitor, nominated by the Holy Office, to take informations

against Samuel Simon, who is accused of Judaism. You live with him, and, in consequence, are witness to the greatest part of his behaviour. I believe it is unnecessary to advertise you of the obligation you are under, to declare all that you know of him, when I order you to do so, in the name of the Holy Inquisition.' 'Señor Licentiate (replied the young man), I am very ready to satisfy you on that head, without being commanded in the name of the Holy Office. If my master was to take me for his text, I am persuaded that he would not spare me; I will therefore deal as plainly with him, and tell you, in the first place, that he is a close hunks, whose true sentiments it is impossible to discover: one who affects all the exterior of a holy man, but has not one scruple of virtue at bottom. He goes every evening to the house of a little Abigail.' 'I am glad to hear that (said Ambrose, interrupting him), and I see, by what you say, that he is a man of bad morals: but, answer precisely to the questions I am going to ask. I am particularly enjoined to know what are his sentiments with respect to religion. Tell me, do you eat pork in your house?' 'I don't think (replied Gaspar) that we have eaten of it twice during the whole year that I have lived with him.' 'Very well (resumed Master Inquisitor): write, secretary, that pork is never eaten in the house of Samuel Simon. But, to make amends for that (continued he), you doubtless, eat lamb sometimes.' 'Yes, sometimes (replied the 'prentice), we had some, for example, last Easter.' 'A lucky epoch! (cried the commissary) write, secretary, that Simon keeps the Passover. This goes on excellently well, and, methinks, we have received good intelligence.

'Besides, you must tell me, friend (added Lamela), if you have never seen your master caress little children.' 'A thousand times (replied Gaspar), when he sees little boys pass by his shop, if they are at all handsome, he stops and fondles them.' 'Write, Master Secretary (said the inquisitor, interrupting him), that Samuel Simon is violently suspected of

decoying Christian children into his house, in order to cut their throats[1]. A fine proselyte indeed! Oh, ho! Master Simon, you shall have to do with the Holy Office, take my word for it; you must not imagine that you will be allowed to make your barbarous sacrifices with impunity. Courage, zealous Gaspar (said he to the 'prentice), declare all that you know of the matter; and give us to understand, that this false Catholic is more attached than ever to the Jewish customs and ceremonies. Does not he spend one day of the week in total inaction?' 'No (answered Gaspar), I have not observed that: I only perceive that on some days he shuts himself up in his closet, where he remains a long time.' 'Ah ha! (cried the commissary) he keeps the sabbath, as sure as I am an inquisitor. Mark, secretary, mark that he religiously observes the fast of the sabbath. Ah! the abominable wretch! I have only one thing more to ask. Does not he speak also of Jerusalem?' 'Very often (replied the young man), he relates to us the history of the Jews, and in what manner the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed.' 'Right! (said Ambrose) Master Secretary, let not this piece of intelligence escape you: write, in large characters, that Samuel Simon breathes nothing but the restoration of the Temple; and that he meditates night and day the re-establishment of his nation. I do not want to know

[1] A reference to the belief, common in the Middle Ages and not wholly extinct in the nineteenth century, that it was a practice among Jews to crucify a Christian child on Good Friday. Cf. Chaucer, *The Prioresses' Tale*, 232-234:

> O yonge Hugh of Lincoln, slayn also
> With cursed Iewes, as it is notable,
> For it nis but a litel whyle ago. . . .

For the effect of this belief in Spain see *El Santo Niño de la Guardia* in Dr. H. C. Lea's *Chapters from the religious history of Spain connected with the Inquisition* (Philadelphia, 1890), pp. 437-468. The subject has been dramatized by Lope de Vega and by José de Cañizares.

any more; therefore, it is needless to ask any other questions: what the trusty Gaspar has deposed, is enough to bring a whole synagogue to the stake.'

Master Commissary of the Holy Office having interrogated the 'prentice in this manner, told him he might retire: but ordered him, in the name of the Holy Inquisition, to conceal from his master every tittle of what had passed. Gaspar having promised to obey, took his leave; and we did not tarry long after he went out, but leaving the public house, as gravely as we had entered, went and knocked at the door of Samuel Simon, who opened it with his own hand; and if he was astonished to see three such figures as we were, he was much more so, when Lamela, being spokesman, said to him, with an imperious tone, 'Mr. Samuel, I command you, in the name of the Holy Inquisition, of which I have the honour to be commissary, to deliver into my hand, this instant, the key of your closet: I want to see if I cannot find something to justify the informations which have been presented to us, against you.'

The merchant, confounded at these words, reeled two steps backward, as if he had received a blow on the stomach. Far from suspecting us of any trick, he believed implicitly, that some secret enemy wanted to subject him to the suspicion of the Holy Office; perhaps too, knowing himself to be no good Catholic, he had cause to be afraid of an information. Be that as it will, I never saw a man more disconcerted; he obeyed without resistance, and opened his closet, with all the respect that a man could show, who is in terror of the Inquisition. 'At least (said Ambrose, while he went in), at least you receive the orders of the Holy Office without contumacy. But (added he) retire into another room, and leave me liberty to perform my function.' Samuel was as obedient to this order as to the first: he remained in his shop, while we three entered his closet, and began to search for his cash, which we easily found; for it was in an open coffer, and in much greater quantity than we

could carry off, consisting of a great number of bags piled one upon another; but the whole in silver. We should have liked gold better; but things being as they were, we were fain to accommodate ourselves to necessity, and fill our pockets with ducats. We stuffed our breeches with them, and crammed them into every other part which we judged proper to conceal them. In short, we were heavy laden, though our cargo did not appear; and this was owing to the address of Ambrose and Don Raphael, who, by their behaviour on this occasion, let me see that there is nothing like one's being master of his trade.

After having done our business so successfully, we came out of the closet, and, for a reason that the reader will easily guess, Master Inquisitor took out his padlock, and fixed it to the door with his own hand, then applying the seal, said to Simon, 'Master Samuel, I forbid you, in the name of the Holy Inquisition, to touch this padlock, as well as the seal, which you are bound to respect, since it is the true seal of the Holy Office. I will return at the same hour to-morrow, in order to take it off, and bring further orders for you.' So saying, he made him open the street-door, through which we joyfully passed, one after another. When we had gone about fifty yards, we began to walk with such speed and nimbleness, that we scarce touched the ground, notwithstanding the burdens which we carried. We soon got out of town, and remounting our horses, pushed towards Segorba, giving thanks to the god Mercury, for such a happy event.

CHAPTER II

The resolution which Don Alphonso and Gil Blas formed after this adventure

We travelled all night, according to our laudable custom, and found ourselves at break of day, near a little village two leagues from Segorba. As we were all fatigued, we willingly quitted the highway, to get

among some willows, which we perceived at the bottom of a little hill, ten or twelve hundred paces from the village, in which we did not think proper to stop. We found that the willows yielded an agreeable shade, being watered by a small rivulet; and the place suiting our taste, we resolved to spend the day in it. Alighting, therefore, we unbridled our horses to let them feed, and lay down upon the grass, where we took a little repose. We then emptied our knapsack and leathern bottle, and having made a plentiful breakfast, counted all the money which we had taken from Samuel Simon, and which amounted to three thousand ducats; so that, with this sum, and what we had before, we might have boasted of having a pretty good stock.

As it was necessary for some of us to go and buy provisions, Ambrose and Don Raphael, having quitted their dress of inquisitor and secretary, said that they would take that charge upon themselves; that the adventure at Xelva had only whetted their appetite; that they longed to be at Segorba, to see if some occasion would not offer, of striking a new stroke. 'You have nothing to do (added the son of Lucinda), but wait for us under these willows; we will not tarry, but rejoin you in a very short time.' 'Señor Don Raphael (cried I, laughing), bid us rather wait for you till domesday; if you leave us now, I believe we need not expect to see you sooner.' 'We are affronted by your suspicion (replied Señor Ambrose), but we deserve it at your hands: your distrust is excusable, after what we did at Valladolid; and we cannot blame you for thinking that we will make no more scruple of forsaking you, than of abandoning our comrades in that city: but, however, you are mistaken; the confederates, from whose company we withdrew, were persons of very bad characters, and their society began to grow insupportable. We must do justice to people of our profession by affirming that there are no associates in civil life less divided by interest than they: but when there is not a conformity of

inclinations among them, their good understanding may be broke, as well as that of the rest of mankind. Wherefore, Señor Gil Blas (added Lamela), we beg that you and Don Alphonso will have a little more confidence in us; and let not the desire of Don Raphael and me to go to Segorba, give you the least uneasiness.'

'It is an easy matter (said the son of Lucinda) to rid them of all cause of anxiety: let them remain masters of the cash, and then they will have, in their own hands, good security for our return. You see, Señor Gil Blas (added he), that we come to the point at once. You shall have pledges in your hands, and I can assure you, that Ambrose and I will set out, without the least apprehension of your giving us the slip. After such a certain mark of our fidelity, won't you trust entirely to our promise?' 'Yes, gentlemen (said I), and you may now do what you please.' They departed immediately with the leathern bottle and knapsack, leaving me under the willows with Don Alphonso, who, after they were gone, said to me, 'Señor Gil Blas, I must disclose my sentiments to you. I upbraid myself with having had the complaisance to come so far with two sharpers: you cannot imagine how often I have repented of this my conduct. Yesterday, while I took care of the horses, I made a thousand mortifying reflections: I considered, that it ill became a young man, who has principles of honour, to live with such wicked wretches as Don Raphael and Lamela; that if unluckily, one day, which may not be far off, a trick should miscarry, by which we shall fall into the hands of justice, I shall be shamefully punished with them as a thief, and undergo the most infamous chastisement. These images incessantly occur to my fancy; and I own I have resolved, that I may no longer be an accomplice of their misdemeanours, to separate from them for ever. I don't believe (continued he) that you will disapprove of my design.' 'No, I'll assure you (answered I), though you have seen me act the part of an alguazil, in the comedy of Samuel Simon, don't

imagine that these sorts of pieces are to my taste. I take heaven to witness, that while I played such a fine part, I said within myself, "In faith, Mr. Gil Blas, if justice should now come and seize you by the collar, you would richly deserve the salary which she would bestow." I feel myself, therefore, no more disposed than you, Señor Don Alphonso, to remain longer in such good company; and if you will give me leave, I will accompany you. When the gentlemen return, we will demand our share of the finances, and to-morrow morning, or this very night, bid them an eternal adieu.'

The beautiful Seraphina's lover approved of my proposal: 'Let us (said he) get into Valencia, and embark for Italy, where we may engage in the Venetian service. Is it not better to carry arms, than lead this base guilty life? we shall even be in a condition to make a pretty good figure with the money which we have: not that I can use such ill-gotten wealth without remorse; but besides that I am compelled by necessity, if ever I make the least fortune in war, I swear that I will indemnify Samuel Simon.' I assured Don Alphonso, that I entertained the same sentiments, and, in short, we resolved to leave our comrades, next morning before day. We had not the least temptation to profit by their absence, that is, to decamp immediately with the cash: the confidence they had shown, in leaving us masters of the money, did not permit us to harbour such a thought.

Ambrose and Don Raphael returned from Segorba in the evening; and the first thing they told us was, that their journey had been prosperous; that they had laid the foundation of a stratagem, which, in all likelihood, would be more advantageous than the last. Accordingly, the son of Lucinda was going to inform us of the particulars, when Don Alphonso declared his resolution to leave them; and let them know that I had the same intention. They used all their endeavours, in vain, to engage us to accompany them in

their expeditions; for we took leave of them next day, after having made an equal partition of the money, and proceeded on our way to Valencia.

CHAPTER III

After what disagreeable incident Don Alphonso found his wishes fulfilled; and by what adventure Gil Blas, of a sudden, saw himself in a happy situation

We pushed forward cheerfully, as far as Bunol, where unfortunately being obliged to halt, Don Alphonso fell sick of a high fever, with violent paroxysms, which made me afraid of his life. Luckily there was no physician in the place, and I was quit for my fear: he was out of danger at the end of three days, and my care helped to re-establish his health. He showed himself very sensible of what I had done for him; and as we felt a reciprocal kindness for one another, we swore an eternal friendship.

We betook ourselves again to the road, still resolved, when we should arrive at Valencia, to take the first opportunity of a passage into Italy. But heaven disposed of us otherwise. Seeing a number of peasants, of both sexes, dancing in a circle, and making merry, before the gate of a fine castle, we approached to behold their mirth; and Don Alphonso expected nothing less than the surprise with which he was seized, all of a sudden. He perceived the Baron de Steinbach, who no sooner knew him again, than he ran to him with open arms, saying, in a transport of joy, 'Ah, Don Alphonso! is it you? what an agreeable encounter is this! while inquiry is made after you, all over the kingdom, chance presents you to my view.'

My companion alighting immediately, ran and embraced the Baron, whose joy seemed immoderate. 'Come, my son (said the good old man to him), you will now know who you are, and enjoy the most perfect happiness.' So saying, he carried him into the castle, which I likewise entered along with them: for while they embraced one another, I had alighted

and tied our horses to a tree. The master of the castle was the first person whom we met. He was a man of about fifty years of age, and a very engaging aspect: 'Señor (said the Baron de Steinbach, presenting Don Alphonso to him), behold your son.' At these words, Don Caesar de Leyva (so was the master of the castle called) threw his arms about Don Alphonso's neck, and weeping with joy, 'My dear son (said he), you see in me the author of your being: if I have let you remain so long in ignorance of your birth, believe me, I did in that a cruel violence to myself: I have a thousand times sighed with sorrow; but I could not do otherwise. I married your mother through inclination, though she was of a birth inferior to mine; and lived under the authority of a harsh father, who reduced me to the necessity of keeping secret a marriage contracted without his consent. The Baron de Steinbach alone was in my confidence, and it was in concert with me that he brought you up. In short, my father is no more, and I now am at liberty to declare you my sole heir. This is not all (added he), you shall be married to a young lady, whose nobility equals mine.' 'Señor (cried Don Alphonso, interrupting him), don't make me pay too dear for the happiness which you bestow. Cannot I know that I have the honour of being your son, without learning, at the same time, that you want to make me unhappy? Ah, sir! be not more cruel than your own father, who, though he did not approve of your passion, was not so severe as to force you to marry.' 'Son (replied Don Caesar), I don't intend to tyrannize over your affections: but be so complaisant as to see the lady whom I destine for your bed: that is all I exact of your obedience. Though she is a charming creature, and a very advantageous match for you, I promise not to constrain you to make her your wife. She is now in the castle; follow me, and you will own, that there never was a more amiable object.' So saying, he conducted Don Alphonso into an apartment, whither I attended them, with the Baron de Steinbach.

There was the Count de Polan, with his two daughters, Seraphina and Julia, and Don Fernando, his son-in-law, who was nephew to Don Caesar: there were other ladies and gentlemen present also. Don Fernando (as was already observed) had carried off Julia; and it was on occasion of the marriage of these two lovers, that the peasants of the neighbourhood were assembled to make merry. As soon as Don Alphonso appeared, and his father had presented him to the company, the Count de Polan got up, and running to embrace him, said, 'Welcome, my deliverer! Don Alphonso (added he), observe the power that virtue has on generous minds: if you killed my son, you have also saved my life. I sacrifice my resentment to you, and give you that Seraphina, whose honour you have preserved. In this manner I acquit myself of my obligation.' The son of Don Caesar did not fail to testify to the Count de Polan, how much he was affected with his generosity; and I don't know whether he felt more joy in discovering his birth, or in learning that he was to be Seraphina's husband. In effect, that marriage was celebrated a few days after, to the infinite satisfaction of the parties concerned.

As I was also one of the Count's deliverers, that nobleman, who knew me again, assured me, he would take upon himself the care of making my fortune; but I thanked him for his generosity, and would not leave Don Alphonso, who made me steward of his house, and honoured me with his confidence. Scarce was he married, when the trick which had been played upon Samuel Simon, lying on his conscience, he sent me to that merchant, with all the money which had been stolen from him. I went accordingly to make restitution, and began the business of a steward, by doing that which ought to be the end of it.

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